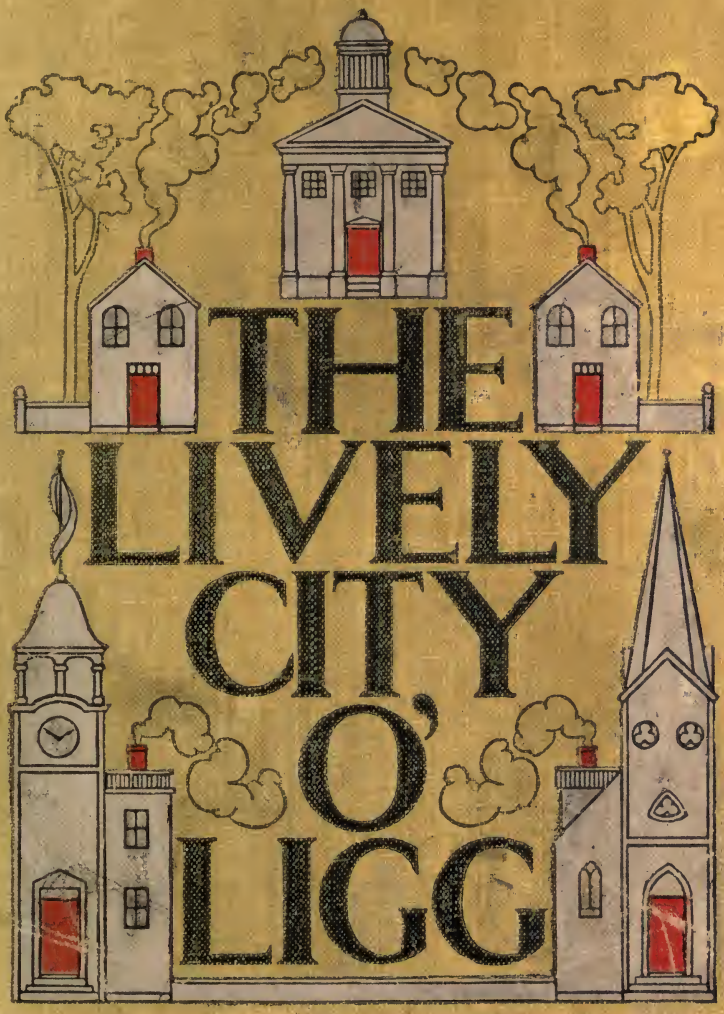

THE LIVELY CITY O' LIGG

GELETT BURGESS

Arthur C. Drysdale,
San Mateo,
Calif.

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GELETT BURGESS

THE LIVELY CITY O' LIGG

A Cycle of Modern Fairy Tales
for City Children

BY
GELETT BURGESS

FORMERLY EDITOR OF THE "LARK"
AUTHOR OF "VIVETTE," ETC.

WITH FIFTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS
BY THE AUTHOR

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY,
PUBLISHERS

TO
ARNOLD'S SENSITIVE TASTE
AND
ROBIN'S ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT
THESE HEADLONG FANCIES
ARE FEARFULLY SUBMITTED.

The Author and Illustrator desires to express his gratitude to MR. HARVEY ELLIS, of Rochester, N. Y., for the interest he has added to this book by a sympathetic colouring of the plates, achieved with an originality far above the capacity of their envious draughtsman.

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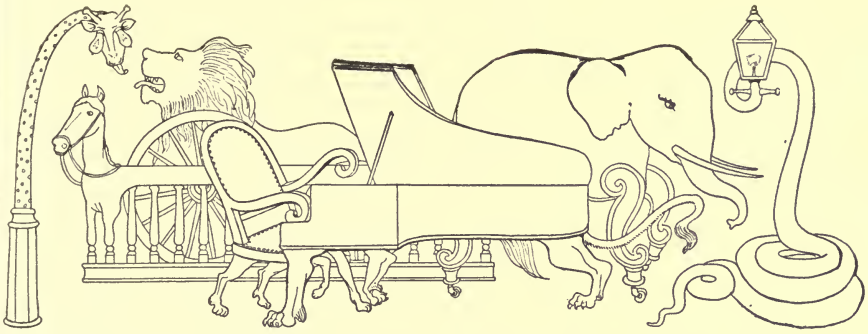

PREFACE for Skeptic Parents

The Derivation of Inanimate Things

THERE is no mistake more common in everyday life, than that which transposes cause for effect; and it is nowhere more common than in our conception of Inanimate Objects. We say that because Objects are inanimate, therefore they are not intelligent; whereas the proper reasoning would affirm that because they are not intelligent, therefore they are not animated. This casuistry, however, does not carry us far afield, since most are willing to accept without challenge the fact that such objects are, in point of fact, neither animated nor intelligent. It is only when we push the investigation toward the speculation as to whether or not they ever existed in any other condition, that opinions diverge.

It is remarkable what slow progress has been made in

this question since its partial discussion by Mrs. Walker. Her essay upon the Total Depravity of Inanimate Things * broke the first ground, but subsequent attempts to pursue the matter have been few and fitful. Mrs. Walker, indeed proceeded in the most unscientific and loose manner, and contented herself with an analysis of a minor consideration, a specialised detail of the characteristics of Inanimate Objects, missing the opportunity of being the first to formulate the theory that such objects do or did actually possess more or less highly developed characteristics, manners and customs, of which their total depravity is but one evidence.

It is not too late, then, to go back to the main point at issue, and assemble the main evidences of what may be called character, in the Unnatural Science of the whole genera. To be comprehensive, to catalogue all the data bearing upon the subject, would extend unduly the limits of such an essay as this, and therefore, only a few of the many various phases of the subject will be taken up; enough to prove indubitably the thesis, but leaving to subsequent investigators the collocation of the myriad facts necessary to establish the definitive and exhaustive deductions that shall formulate and classify all inanimate phenomena.

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* "The Total Depravity of Inanimate Things," by Mrs. E. A. Walker. "Little Classics" Series,—Volume V. "Laughter."

The three most convincing proofs that such an unnatural science does exist, and that, whatever their present condition, inanimate objects are derived from similar objects possessing animation in a more or less developed state, from which condition they have, in the supremacy of Man, degenerated, are as follows:

I. Evidences of prehistoric animation, shown by Etymology, in the gender of words in foreign languages, and English idiom, etc.

II. Evidences of a comatose or degenerate animation in the Objects themselves.

III. Evidences of degenerate functions and features in Architecture.

1. We have only to inspect the empirical use of gender in French and other substantives, to be confronted immediately with a paradox which the affirmation of this thesis alone can explain. The English language has, it is true, discarded the old categories, but that, it might be said, *en passant*, is but another example of the hard and fast literalness of our tongue, its radical spirit, constantly changing to the spirit of new conditions, its disregard for derivation and analogy; in a word, its wonderful power of growth. We need only go back one step to the French, however, to find the evidences which English Etymology has been in such haste to conceal.

In French, then, we have the following Objects, for example, classed as Masculine: Balloon, Piano, Train, Cannon, Cab, Mill, and Boat; while other things are designated as Feminine, such as House, Chair, Table, Locomotive, Church, Stable, and Lantern.

Obviously, where there is evidence of sex, there must have been life, one being a function of the other, and the inevitable conclusion is that at some period of their existence, all these Objects, and many others, must have been known to be, or to have been, animate as late as the rise of the Romance tongues.

At first glance the German Language seems to contain evidences of a transitionary state, and, to mark the first abandonment of the old tradition that objects had been once alive, we find the use of the neuter gender, so called, to distinguish many objects, as well as a double use of masculine and feminine. For instance, we have three words for Mill: *Meizel*, (Masculine) *Muehle* (feminine) and *Hammerwerk*, (Neuter). The superficial explanation would doubtless be, that with the growing distrust in the early legends, the genders of objects had become confused in the Teutonic mind, newly freed from the strict empire of this theory, and become lax and inaccurate, and there is no doubt that the increasing use of the neuter form played havoc with the former recognised distinction.

Indeed, it is only fair to say, this view is strenghtened by the fact that many words masculine in French are feminine in German,—Cannon, Boat, for instance, to cite from our previous list, where, too, the reverse case may be exemplified as well.

A deeper reasoning, however, will convince one that this theory is not inadequate, and it is impossible to escape the more comprehensive explanation that this double form in so many substantives proves a much more reasonable state of things, i. e., that objects in their animate state had highly developed sexual distinctions, *even amongst things of the same sort.* In fine, there were doubtless male and female houses, mills, and pianos, &c., as might naturally be inferred *à priori.* Thus the German Genders hark back to the primeval knowledge of mankind even more clearly than the French, the Teutonic imagination and poetic insight retaining faith in the early myths long after it had crystalised into an empirical dogma amongst the Gauls.

But though we have not these convincing evidences in English etymology, our native idiom preserves many traces of the folk, or rather the object-lore of our ancestors. We still speak of the legs of a chair, of the arms of a sofa, the back of a settee, the hands of a watch. It is idle to controvert the obvious inference by suppos-

ing these to have been named merely by resemblances of form. Does the leg of a table resemble in any way the leg of a man or a horse? No! it undoubtedly was so named, far back in the early days of the race, because at one time tables had legs, with which they stood, walked, ran and kicked. In the same way it is not uncommon, even nowadays, to hear that highly suggestive idiom: "the lamp has gone out," and the craftsmen, who perhaps preserve more of the old words and phrases than any other class, still speak of the "teeth" of saws, the "heads" of nails, the "eyes" of needles: the printer "feeds" his press; we speak of a piano as "grand" or "upright," we even distinguish "bell" buoys. These are only a few of a thousand cases that might be cited in support of the theory.

2. The evidence of degenerate functions or even actions of Inanimate Objects has been too well shown, in the above-mentioned essay, to need much elaboration here. The reader is referred to that work, and, his eyes once opened to the bearing of its evidence upon the higher issues involved, he may easily read into the text, a full exposition of the importance of such phenomena, in their bearing upon the case. Many other manifestations might be adduced, such as the table-tipping of Spiritualists, never before accounted for by this simple explana-

tion, the shutting of doors, and the ease with which small articles get lost. A ball left standing upon the slope of a hill, will run down to the bottom. The clock moves its hands, strikes, and goes slow or fast; all objects grow old. If these instances are not conclusive, further multiplication of cases is futile.

3. Not the least interesting, though perhaps not the most conclusive, evidence of a previous state of animation in Inanimate Objects is to be found in Architecture. There is no doubt that houses were the most highly organised, as well as the first and best known objects with which Primeval Man was familiar. The esteem with which dwellings were held by the descendants of the cave-dwellers is evidenced in the earliest attempts to imitate houses, and it is a remarkable and conclusive fact, that *as yet no single house built by our primitive ancestors, however remote, has been found that does not possess some sort of rude elementary door*, and indeed, as far back as the Lake dwellings, we have abundant corroboration of the fact that windows were not unknown!

The door and window, in fact, were persistent elements in all ancient Architecture. We can trace the influence of the original idea through the Roman, Egyptian, Greek, Byzantine, and Rénaissance periods, down to the very end of the Victorian Era. What does this mean?

There is scarcely any doubt but that, in the original Animate Objects, the door was by way of being the mouth of the house, and it was but natural that Primitive Man, to whom food was the most important need of his savage life, emphasised the organ of Eating in his earliest attempts at architecture. Next to subsistence came the necessity for Seeing. Self Defence demanded an eye, hence the window, the eyes of the extinct Houses. We have just seen how these canons came down to us and how in the development of Architecture they were never wholly lost sight of. Indeed, one need only to look at a modern house to recognise the reasonableness of this hypothesis.

This much is too apparent to need further proof, and few will have the temerity to deny the glaring probabilities of the case, but the unnatural scientist will look farther, and see a host of corroborative details. The most striking, as well as one of the least-known phrases lies in what might be called the "expression" of houses, irrespective of any marked similarity to human beings. This is what architects term "design." It is enough to say that certain houses have an anxious, some an uneasy, and others a generous, reposeful aspect. Our poets are fond of describing church steeples as "fingers pointing Heavenward." The illustration, and the whole miscon-

ceived personification is ill-described, but it exemplifies a state of things well understood by the imaginative.

Could space be afforded, proofs might also be added from mythology and the sacred writings of early literature. We will not insult our readers' intelligence, however, by burdening a volume of proof already overwhelming.

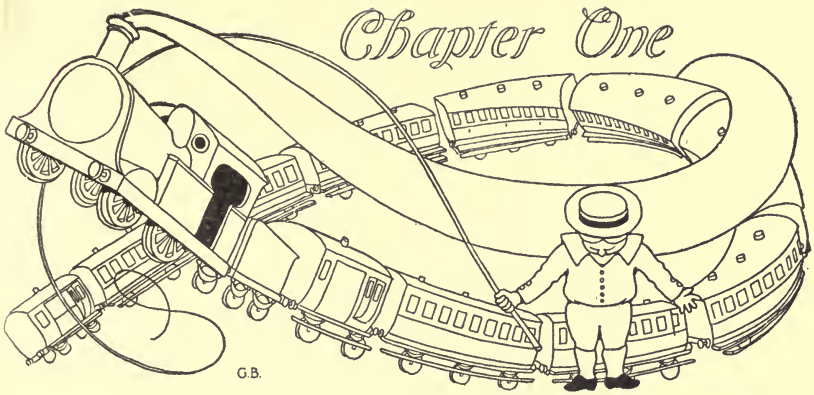
It is unfortunate, that, in this mechanical age, most objects have lost more and more of those characteristics which were common to all before their cidivation. It may be said broadly, however, that the nearer an Object approaches an art, the stronger is its personality, whatever be its powers of will. The piano is a familiar instance, with its gracefully curved legs, which once were capable of dignified locomotion, and its voice, now provoked only at the discretion of the musician. The Camera has other pronounced characteristics and qualities, and a certain curious dignity of its own, despite its absurd three legs (a rudimentary fourth being often noticed), and the early over-development of its eye will occur to every intelligent thinker.

It is not within the scope of this article to discuss the causes which led to the degeneracy of this strange race of objects, the means by which their freedom was subverted by Man, or the scope and locus of its original civilisation.

Less apropos even than interesting this balance of power is the consideration of the possibility of the crossing of the two equi-dominant races or species, as hinted in the analogies of the biped beasts of mythology. Here, however, the reader may investigate for himself and amuse himself with speculations upon the *Equus Caballustrade*, the Liano or Piano Lion, the Giraffopost and other strange mongrels. There was doubtless a stage in the progress of the two races, when animals and objects existed contemporaneously, and were equipped with approximately equal powers, and it is to this era that the *mise en scène* of the tales in this book belongs. But the one was destined to go on and perfect a still higher culture, while the other had already passed its summation of development, and was degenerating. The struggle must have been furious, though probably of short duration, and the laws of Evolution triumphed. We can have no doubt but that it was a survival of the fittest.

THE TERRIBLE TRAIN.


GELETT BURGESS



THE TERRIBLE TRAIN

About twenty-one miles outside of the City o' Ligg, there was a long, narrow, dark, slimy tunnel like a worm-hole in the hills—such a terrible tunnel that no one had ever ventured inside for more than a few steps, and then only by daylight. By night, no one had ever dared go near this awful round hole at all, for in it lived a fearful, fierce and furious railway train, the most terrific train that ever was. It had once been harmless enough, and had carried many a load of passengers from the seaside up to the City o' Ligg, but long ago it had escaped from the railway station, and had run away into the hills, so that it should not have to work.

The tunnel was so narrow that, when inside, the train could not turn itself round, and one could hear it roaring and hissing deep in the dark inside of the hill, grumbling

like a dragon. From time to time it would stick its head out of the hole in the hillside, and whistle with wild, horrible shrieks, and spit fire and steam out of its smoke-stack, and cough out volumes of black smoke, in a way to terrify the people for miles around.

It was an English train, all jointed together with little coaches. Its head was an old-style locomotive, with a closed cab like a monkey's ears. Its thorax was composed of first-class compartment carriages, its abdomen of second and third-class carriages, and it had a tail like a scorpion—a little, stumpy brake-van that wobbled from side to side and would never stay on the line. From nose to tail the train was all of a whitish yellow, like a slug having faded and bleached by living in the darkness of the tunnel for so many years.

The train looked for all the world like a big snake, especially when it came out at night to eat fences; for, as the neighbours had taken up the rails leading into the tunnel, it had to hump itself along like an immense inch-worm, covering an eighth of a mile at each hump! As it worked its way along, it waved its yellow locomotive head from side to side, and its shrieks frightened every person in the country into his house, there to look, with white face, from the third story windows, trembling, till the monster had passed, and had gone back into his

tunnel to sleepily digest a few miles of picket-fence in peace.

Now, many rewards had been offered by the Mayor of the City o'Ligg for the capture of the terrible train, but for a long, long time no one had dared even to think of attempting such a dangerous feat. But there was in town a little boy named Yak, very valourous and high-spirited, who had set his wits to work upon the problem, till at last a good idea crawled into his small head.

So one day he painted himself with black paint from head to foot, so that he could not be seen in the dark. He took a bag of jam sandwiches, and he crawled into the tunnel, to spend the day in watching the train. After he had got in a few miles, he heard the muffled hiss of the engine's pistons, and he flattened himself against the side of the tunnel, and edged along in perfect silence. It was an anxious moment, for if he should come across the head of the train, it would be certain death, because he knew that the train would chase him and eat him up before he could get away.

Suddenly his foot slipped and he fell against the tail of the train, hitting the brake-van that was wagging away very contentedly. Yak's heart jumped, and he gave himself up for lost; but seeing that the train had either not noticed the blow, or had thought it was only some little

hand-car that had ventured in, he worked himself alongside the carriages till, round a curve, he saw a flicker, and there was the train eating away, with its little head-light flashing first on one side of the tunnel and then on the other! The side walls were black and shiny masses of rock. It was as Yak had expected—the train was eating its dinner of anthracite coal!

As the boy watched, he accidentally touched a second-class carriage in the train's most sensitive and ticklish spot. With a roar and a loud, screaming whistle, it began to writhe backwards to get at the intruder, but Yak turned and ran for his life, and reached the mouth of the tunnel just in time to escape being crushed under the wheels.

In spite of the danger, however, Yak crawled into the tunnel the next day and the next, to watch the train eating its dinner of anthracite coal. He had the good luck never to encounter the head of the train, which would undoubtedly have bitten him into little pieces, or even swallowed him whole. The last day he went in was a Sunday, when he found the train feeding at a new place, and Yak saw, by the look of the dull black walls of the tunnel, that this was where the train kept his soft, bituminous coal. There was so little of it that the train kept it only for Sundays, for soft coal was considered a great delicacy by this greedy train.

Now that Yak was sure of the train's weakness, he laid his plans boldly, and, with the help of the Mayor o' Ligg, and a million labourers, he laid a line from the City o' Ligg to the mouth of the tunnel, and spread the track very thickly with a layer of soft, bituminous coal. But to get the train to turn around, so that it should come out head first upon the line—that was the question!

The far end of the tunnel came out of the hill by the side of a river, where Yak had often seen the train come to drink, and so here the boy and the Mayor came, with their million men. They dug and they delved for many nights and many days, till they had dammed the stream, and made a new channel leading from the river to the mouth of the tunnel. When, at last, all was ready, they waited till the train had gone into the tunnel after drinking one evening and then turned the stream into the portal, and it rushed through the hole in the hill like a deluge, washing the terrible train, half drowned and spluttering, head foremost, out into the open air, alongside the new laid-line. The train, which had not had a bath for many, many years, took it a good deal more good-humouredly than might have been expected, and, shaking itself till the water was spattered over the countryside like a thunderstorm, it crawled upon the embankment, and began to eat the soft coal, as if nothing disturbing had happened.

When it had eaten all it could burn, it slowly backed into the tunnel again and slept all night, snoring loudly. It came out every day after that, rolling along the rails, and eating a little more coal each time, getting gradually farther and farther from its tunnel, till, in three weeks it had boldly entered the City o' Ligg!

Now, the end of the line led into the Grand Opera House, and precisely a month after its bath, the train puffed into the building, heavy with coal, and coiling itself up in the orchestra and lazily thumping its tail against the balconies, it fell fast asleep!

In a moment the doors were bolted. Then, telling the Mayor that the rest was easily done, Yak ran home and went to bed, for he had not had a good night's sleep for a month.

When he re-entered the Grand Opera House, the train was lying in a stupor, its tail limp, and its little head-light dull and smoky. Yak seated himself beside the locomotive and softly stroked its head. As the train slowly awoke, it felt the little boy oiling its wheels, and quietly rubbing the connecting-rods, and polishing the brasses and boiler of its locomotive. This kindness was too affecting for the train to resist; its engine would not snort and its bell rang very softly, so as not to frighten its little friend. Yak came every day to see the train,

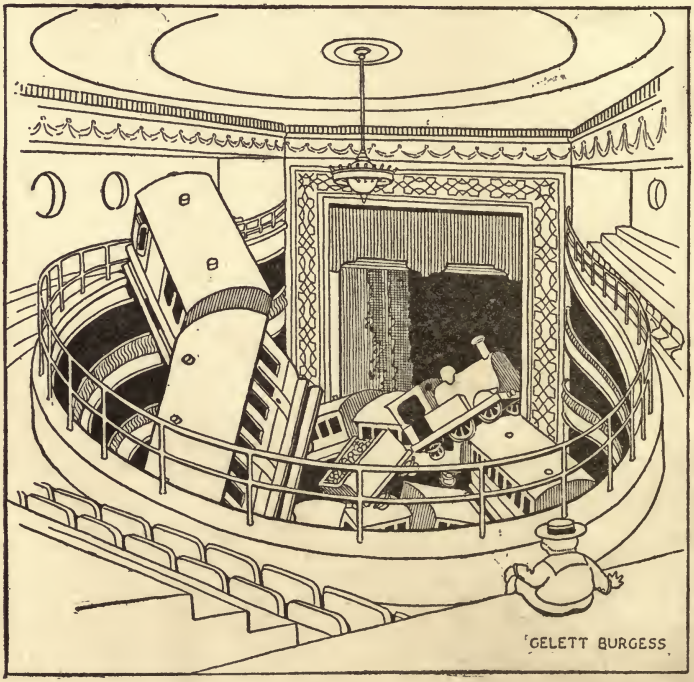
and at last the monster grew so tame that it would eat out of the boy's hand.

The train was now released from the Opera House and all the citizens of the City o' Ligg came out to welcome it and its little master. All praised its docility. The little girls brought garlands of roses and hung them round its neck, and the ladies of the town trimmed it with flags, while the men painted it freshly with white and gold. It was pointed out to all the railway stations as a model of deportment.

The train never outgrew its love for its little master, Yak, and it became his especial pet, carrying him to school every day, and waiting for him under the trees until he was ready to return home. It would, however, never allow any of the other children on its back; it would gently but firmly shake them off, whenever they attempted to steal a ride. Long after Yak grew too old to work, his faithful train supported him by doing acrobatic tricks for tourists in the City o' Ligg, and many strangers brought away with them strange and improbable tales of a train that would stand on its head for a penny, or climb the church steeple and spin the weather vane for their amusement.

At last the train died. It was a sad and cruel death, caused by a malicious little boy, who was jealous of Yak's

reputation as a train-tamer. He found the train alone one night, on a siding, and, after uncoupling all the carriages, shunted them around to different parts of the station yard. The next morning help was sent for, but,

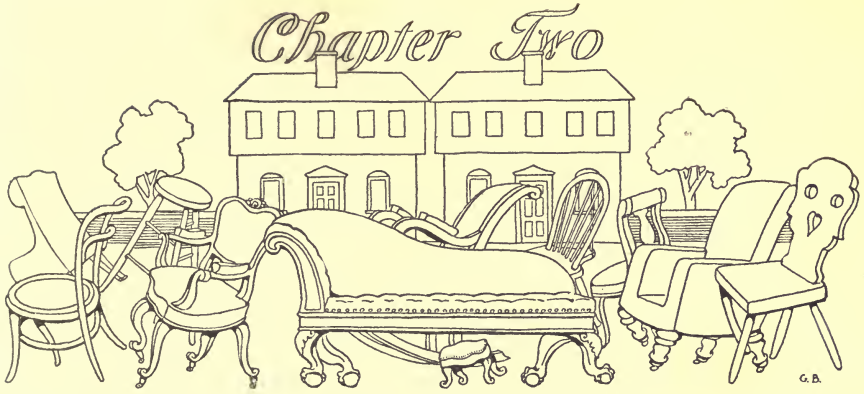


by a fearful mistake, the train was put together wrongly, with all the third-class carriages next the locomotive! It had much trouble in digesting even the softest coke or wood after this, and at last it came to a standstill upon a suspension bridge, and never moved again.

THE RUNAWAY CHAIRS.


GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Two



THE RUNAWAY CHAIRS

It was a sly old rocking-chair that began it, but the conspiracy spread so quickly all over the City o' Ligg that all the furniture must have been quite ready for the plot.

"I have been sat upon quite enough!" said the rocker; "not to speak of the horrid men that put their feet in my lap."

"I don't see why you should care if they put their feet on you," a pert little foot-stool replied. "For my part, I think it's low of them to sit on me; *you* were made for that, but I wasn't!"

"At all events," the old sofa grumbled, "only one can sit on you at a time—you needn't complain. What would you do if a half dozen of them tried to sit on you at once? That's what they do to me!"

"Well, they can't throw you around the room, and use you for a step-ladder or a table, anyway!" It was a frisky young stool who had interrupted. "They not only put their feet on me, but they stand on me, too! Look at my rungs—they're all barked and sore; the skin's all knocked off."

"Wait till they break your leg as they did mine, before you talk," said the easy chair. "They gave my arm an awful wrench yesterday; and, the first thing I know, I'll have to go to the cabinet-maker's, and have it set. Perhaps you know what hot glue feels like, young fellow?"

"No, thank Heaven, I don't!" said the stool; "but I have been scraped and sandpapered!"

"*That* doesn't hurt!" said the table. "When they begin to use the plane on you, then you can squeak! Here I am, with only two castors to my feet. I wonder how *they'd* like to go without toes?"

"That's all right; you don't have to be upholstered, and tacked and sown up. Perhaps it's fun to have long needles stuck into you every year or so, and about a thousand tacks driven in, and have all your stuffing pulled out, just as soon as it's flattened down easy in the worn spots!" The rocking-chair tossed violently as it spoke, and hitched its way over to the stool.

"What are you going to do about it?" said the piano-stool, turning from one to the other.

"I have been thinking about it, and I propose that we all strike, and send the foot-stool round through the town to notify all the furniture in all the houses to quit work," the rocker said.

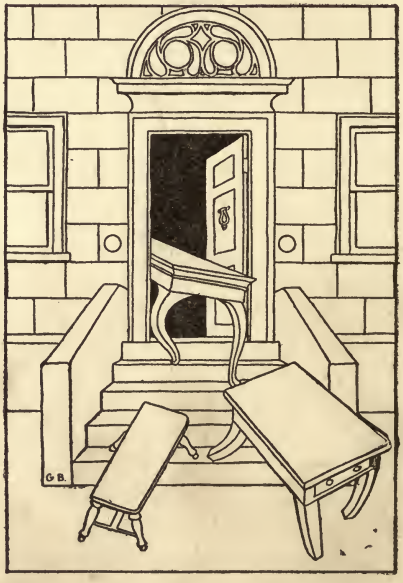
The plot was discussed and accepted forthwith, and that night the little foot-stool stole out of doors, and visited a dozen houses. Up and down the street the excitement spread, and every piece of furniture in the City o' Ligg was at last converted, except the pianos.

"It's all right for you fellows," they said, "but we have no complaints. They don't dare abuse *us*, and stand on us, or leave the window open so that we'll catch cold, for we're too jolly expensive! But you go on, and we wish you good luck!"

And so it was decided that, on an appointed night, every piece of furniture in the City o' Ligg should run away into the woods outside the town. The houses, after a good deal of persuasion, reluctantly consented to open their doors.

Now, the little boy named Yak lived in the very house where the plot began, and that night he went to sleep upon the old sofa, under a large rug. Why the sofa never told the others, was never found out. Perhaps

he thought he would keep the boy prisoner as a hostage, perhaps the sofa was so heavy that he did not notice the extra weight, but, at any rate, Yak slept on through all the bustle of the runaway, and never woke up until it was all over.



It was a strange sight, the migration of the chairs and tables, that August night. At twelve o'clock, all over the city o' Ligg, the doors of the houses slowly opened, and creeping quietly downstairs came lines of chairs, and stools, and tables, and sofas. As each house was emptied,

the furniture formed in line and marched silently to the park in the centre of the town. The lamp posts waved at them as they passed, and the few ash-barrels that were left upon the streets rolled with laughter to see the clumsy old pieces of furniture go by.

In the park they were joined by many benches, anxious to escape from the work they had to do, not only by day but often by night, when, at least, the others might rest. The rocking-chair then divided the whole army into divisions for the march.

First came the little foot-stools. After these came the three and four-legged stools and piano-stools, who creaked like a fife-corps in time with the marching legs of the straight chairs that followed. There were thousands of these ; dining-chairs, parlour chairs with curved legs, stiff chamber chairs—stuffed, padded, and cane-seated. The arm-chairs and sofas came next, waddling along heavily, and a regiment of tables brought up the rear. Alongside the procession galloped the rockers, keeping the whole line moving in an orderly fashion, and carrying orders back and forth. The chairs with castors got along very easily on the paved streets, but when they struck the rough roads of the country, they slipped in the most ludicrous fashion.

The wood was reached just as day broke, and the whole

army stood around amongst the trees, and rested. The campaign had been a great success, and they laughed to think that their days of work were over. As long as they could hide in the forest they were safe.

It was just as they were congratulating themselves on their freedom that little Yak awoke. When he put his head out from under the rug, he was astonished to see himself in the forest; but when he looked round, and saw thousands and thousands of chairs and tables and sofas, he could not believe his eyes. The old rocker had just begun to address the assembled furniture.

"Fellow Pieces," said he, "this is all right for a beginning, and we may congratulate ourselves upon our success, but we have a still greater duty to perform. There is no doubt that as soon as our loss is discovered, other pieces of furniture will be speedily manufactured and will be forced to submit to the slavery from which we have escaped. Can we rest happily here, while our new-made brothers and sisters are ground under the foot of tyrant Man?"

"NO!" cried all the furniture, as with a single voice.

"No!" answered the rocker. "I, myself, am of the solidest mahogany, and I am one of the oldest Sheraton designs; but were I the cheapest veneer, my glue would boil at such selfishness. Let us send emissaries, then,

into the town every night, and teach these unfortunates how to throw off the yoke! Who will volunteer for this dangerous service?"

Yak waited to hear no more. Luckily he was on the outskirts of the mob, for if he had been observed he would have been trodden to death by the excited chairs. He dropped to the ground and crawled out of sight, and then ran as fast as he could for the town. He found the City o' Legs in confusion. It was now noon, and nobody had been able to sit down, except upon the floor, since early morning. He thought to himself how terrible it would have been if the beds had run away, also!

The inhabitants of the city were dumfounded when they discovered that there was not a seat left in the whole town. They had to eat their dinners from the mantle-pieces or sitting tailor-wise on the floor, and they could not imagine what had become of all their furniture. Yak went directly to the Mayor, and told his story.

"It is impossible that my furniture should have been so ungrateful!" said the Mayor. "Why, it was only last spring that I gave every piece in my house a new coat of varnish!"

"Well," said Yak, "there they all are, and I doubt if there is much varnish left on them by this time."

The Mayor was at last convinced of the exodus, and

taking many horses and many carts, waggons, wains, drays, trucks, and vans, he went out to the wood to see what could be done about the matter. When the pieces of furniture saw men approaching, they formed in battalions, and prepared to fight the enemy. Before the Mayor knew what to expect, a gallant charge of rocking-chairs had attacked the carters, and, while they were in confusion, platoons of heavy dining-tables advanced, and began to rear and kick so that no man could stand against them. The solid mahogany sofas cut off all retreat, and before long the Mayor and all his men were surrounded by the now infuriated furniture.

Although they had won the victory, the old rocker was shrewd enough to know that, now their hiding place was discovered, it was only a question of time when the Mayor would be reinforced by a squadron of cabinet makers with sharp saws and planes; so, taking some of the more influential pieces of furniture aside, he suggested that a treaty be made with the Mayor of the City o' Ligg. This was agreed to, after much discussion, and the offer was proposed to the Mayor.

The Mayor, in his turn, wished to consult with his council, but the chairs refused to allow this. The Mayor haggled about the terms of the agreement, but after he had hesitated some time, eight elephantine billiard tables,

impatient at the delay, threatened to begin to kick with their legs if he did not agree immediately. And so the Mayor, now quite terrified, signed the following agreement :

1. Owners of furniture should not put their feet on anything but foot-stools, and should not sit down on anything but chairs and sofas.

2. Furniture should be repaired and revarnished as soon as possible after being broken or scratched.

3. Furniture should be upholstered with only the best and softest materials, and covered with good taste, gimp to be glued on, and not tacked.

4. Rocking-chairs should have the ends of all rockers round, instead of pointed, and all other chairs to be furnished with easily-rolling castors.

5. The sofas should not have to hold more than three persons, and the twirling piano-stools should be oiled once a week.

6. All the furniture should be carted back to the City o' Ligg with the honours of war.

And back they were carried, indeed, and they drove into the city waving their legs from a thousand carts, waggons, wains, drays, trucks, and vans, from which they were selected by their crestfallen owners, and taken to their respective homes. The houses welcomed them

soberly enough ; but more than one window winked its shutter, as if to say, "That's all right, but I wonder how long it will be before my master puts his feet on the rungs of his best white-and-gold parlour chairs again ?"

THE THREE ELEVATORS.


GELETT
BURGESS

Chapter Three

THE THREE ELEVATORS

THERE was one immense building in the City o' Ligg ; it was twenty-seven stories high ! At the end of the main corridor, which was a gorgeous affair, paved with marble and walled with malachite, there was a shaft, in which lived three elevators.

One of these elevators was very, very strong. One was very, very swift. One was neither very strong nor very swift, but it made up for it by being very, very clever, as you shall see.

The strong elevator was used chiefly for carrying up heavy pieces of merchandise, and was not fitted up so beautifully as the others. The swift one was an "Express Elevator," and did not stop till he got to the twentieth

story. If you wanted to go to a floor between that and the ground floor, you had to take the one in the middle of the three, which was the clever elevator.

At night, after the power was turned off, the three elevators rested, side by side on the ground floor, at the end of the corridor. It was then that they used to gossip over the day's work, and the strong one would brag of the heavy cases he had lifted; the swift one would boast of how he had made the trip to the roof in two minutes many and many a time, and could do it in 1:46, if necessary, with a good elevator boy; and the clever one did not say much, but she would lead the others on, and keep them talking.

One day the swift elevator, who always made the last trip, dropped down to the floor as the electric lights were turned off, in a great excitement.

"What do you think?" he said, "a great, stupid house has crawled on top of this building; it is a ten-story house, too!"

"Heavens! Do you suppose we'll have to make thirty-seven-story trips, now? That is too much of a good thing!" said the strong elevator.

"I am afraid we shall," said the clever one, "unless we can do something about it, in a hurry!"

"What can we do?" cried the other two.

"Well," said the clever one to the swift one, "if you could only go fast enough——"

"Oh, no fear, *I* can go fast enough; you wait!" said the swift elevator, shaking her annunciator drops.

"Or if you were a little stronger," continued the one in the centre, as she looked slyly at the heavy freight car.

The strong one rattled his rope with his chuckles. "Well, I think you can trust *me!*"

"Well, then, perhaps we can do it," said the clever little elevator.

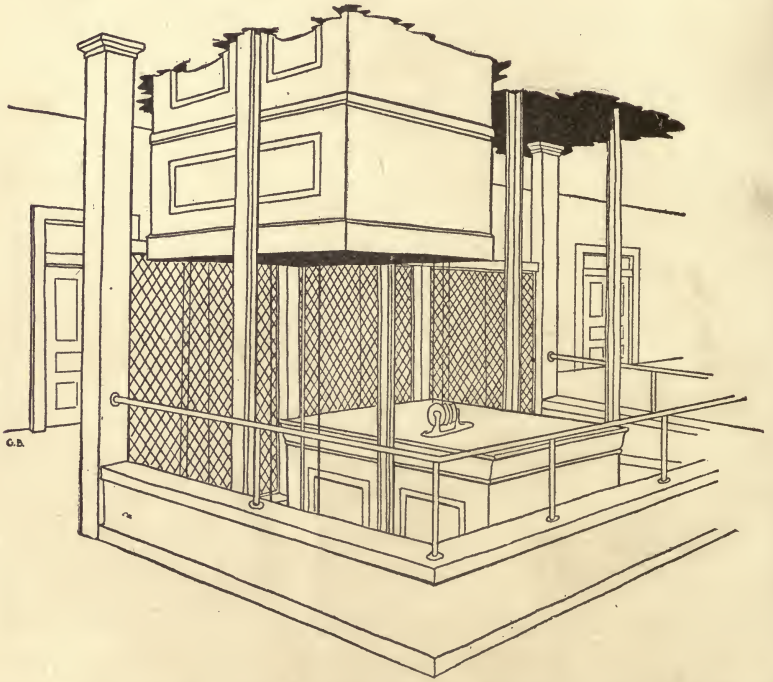
"But *how?*" enquired the other two.

"Why, it's only necessary to push the house off; and it doesn't matter whether you shoot up fast and knock it off with a jerk, or go up slowly, the way old freightie does, and push it off by main force; it's all the same, as long as the house falls off. I'm not very strong, and I'm not very swift, but I can see the way it ought to be done, easily enough."

Then the other two consulted together. "Let *me* try first!" said one, and "No, let *me* try first," said the other, till they had to appeal to the middle one to decide which should have the honour of the first trial.

"Let the express go first," said the clever one, "and if he can't do it, then the goods elevator may try it."

So the express elevator drew a long breath and braced himself against a floor. "*Go!*" cried the others. He shot up like a bullet out of a gun, so fast and so hard that he drove up and up, right into the house on top of the building, where there was no shaft, and tore a hole,



ten stories high, clear through it. But his speed was so great that he flew through the house, high into the air, and then fell down, *smash!* on the roof of the house, and was killed.

"Now, it is your turn," said the clever one, smiling wickedly.

The strong freight car took a tight hold on his rope, and crawled slowly up, story by story, till he had reached the top of the shaft, at the twenty-seventh floor. There he rested a few minutes to get his breath. Then he put his head against the house, and exerted all his strength in a mighty effort. He pushed and pushed, but though he lifted the whole house up about twenty feet, he could do no more.

Then he shouted down the shaft to the other: "Come on and help! It's heavier than I thought, and I can't hold it much longer! Come quickly!"

"I'm right here!" said the clever elevator, who had stolen up the shaft after him; "I'll help."

But instead of helping, that sly little car crawled out of the hole the swift elevator had made, and crept along the roof of the building in the space left by the other's holding up the house. It was lucky for her that the stupid freight elevator could not see, for if he had dropped the house, it would have crushed her flatter than a pancake. She was a little frightened, but she got safely to the edge, and dropped to a roof near by, and lay there laughing to her own naughty little self.

The strong elevator held up the house as long as he could, and then let it drop with a groan.

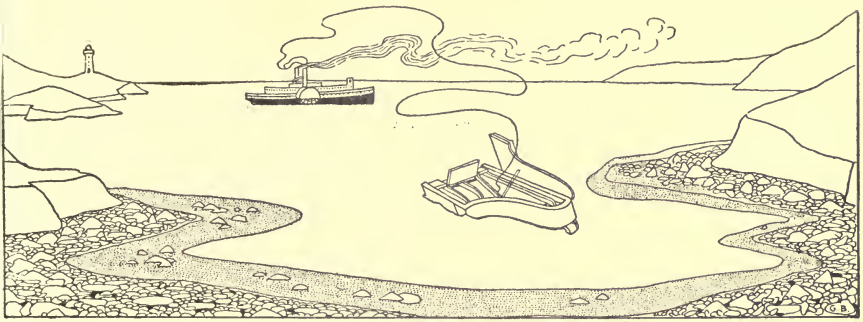
"Why didn't you push more?" he said; but when he came down and found that the clever one was gone, he didn't know what to make of it at all. He was a very dull machine, and he never knew what a fool the sly one had made of them both.

But the clever little car stayed up on the roof in the sun watching the lively City o' Ligg all day, and slept all night, thanking her ropes that she didn't have to work any more, and didn't have to obey an ignorant elevator boy who would stop her with a jerk, and start her with a jounce. And unless she has been taken away and made into a street car, she is there yet!

THE VERY GRAND PIANO.


GELETT
BURGESS

Chapter Four



THE VERY GRAND PIANO

THERE was once a piano in the City o' Ligg, who was so very grand that, besides the black and white keys that most pianos have, he possessed blue and red keys also, on which he could imitate the songs of birds, the ripple of rivulets, and the laughter of little children.

But though he was the grandest piano in the City o' Ligg, he was not at all happy. He had fallen in love with a windmill, who did not encourage him! The piano would often gulumph across the fields of an evening, clumsily climbing the many walls, fences, and hedges on the way, and, standing beneath the long arms of his beloved, he would serenade her plaintively in A-sharp. But it would never do any good; the windmill would not notice him.

After years of such futile devotion, the piano went to call upon an old church organ to seek advice.

"I know very little of love," said the organ, "though I am often present at weddings; but why not try B-flat for a change."

This seemed a good idea to the piano, and that very night he stole out of the music room, and made his way to where the windmiil lived. He struck up a merry, frolicking tune in B-flat, that should have charmed a church clock. Indeed, this time the windmill did not seem so indifferent to his suit. She stopped to fan herself, and turned her head to look at the piano; but when she saw him squatting on three stumpy, though highly ornamented rosewood legs, in the middle of a ploughed field, she laughed aloud.

This was too much for the Very Grand Piano, and, shutting his lid with a bang, he waddled across the field and jumped into the river, intending to drown himself, and so forget his sorrows and perpetual disappointments.

He did not drown, however. The river bore him, floundering, down toward its mouth, but instead of swallowing him, it cast him high and dry, on a desert island, in the harbour. By this time he had decided to live, in spite of his sorrows, and he crawled up into the sun, opened his cover, and dried his sounding-board.

For many days he was too wretched to speak, but at last the burden of his misery was too much to bear, and

he groaned and sang aloud, chiefly in minor chords, upon his blue keys. So he continued, bewailing his fate, till, one day, a kite carried the story of his sorrow to the windmill in the field.

"Is he really as serious and as constant as all that?" she said. "Perhaps I missed something, after all!" And she sent a message, by way of the water-pipe, with whom she was connected (on her mother's side), to let the piano know that she was sorry.

The water-pipe gave the message to the foghorn, who bawled it across to the foolish old piano upon the island. "Come home! Come home!" shouted the foghorn, in a hoarse voice, across the waters of the harbour.

But how was the piano to get home? He could not swim, and there was nothing in which to sail, for all the tugs in the harbour said it was none of *their* business if the piano wanted to make such a fool of himself, and *they* couldn't be expected to carry him.

The piano was now more wretched than ever, and he played on his black keys all day the most heartrending music that ever was heard. The buoys bobbled with sympathy and excitement, but they had to stay and watch for ships, and so, of course, could do nothing. Many weeks passed in this miserable way.

At last a kind old steamboat passed the island, and

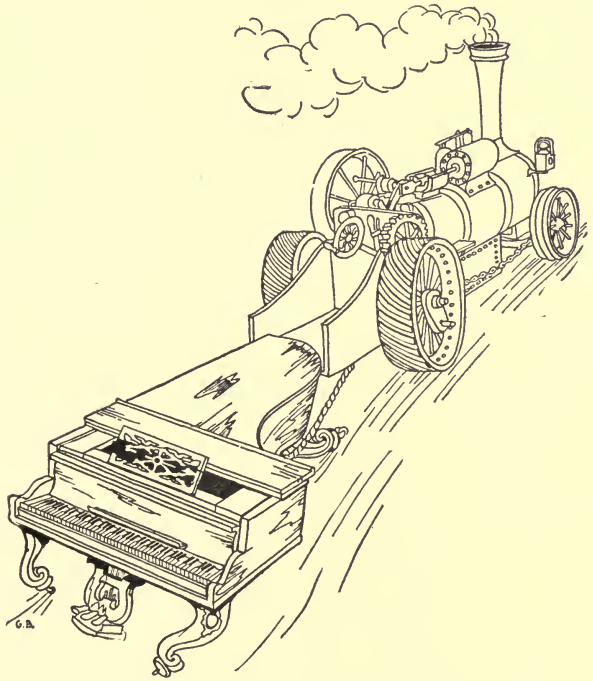
answered the grand piano's frantic signals. The steamboat was willing to help, but the water was too shallow for her to approach very near the island, though the piano, half crazed with disappointment, waded out as far as he dared. All hope seemed over, when the steamboat whistled: "Pull out your strings, and throw them over my funnels!"

With a cry of joy, the piano tore out a few heavy wires and, tying them together, threw them as far as he could. But no, they would not reach! He tore out more and more, till only three wires were left—*A*, *C*, and *D-flat*. This sacrifice enabled him to reach the steamboat, and he was drawn aboard half drowned, and with one leg broken in the operation. It was set, but so clumsily put on that he was bowlegged all the rest of his life.

And so, after many other misfortunes, this Very Grand Piano at last made his way, with the help of a road engine, to the field where the windmill was waiting for him. She, too, had not been happy, and the memory of the beautiful, bright rosewood piano, whom she had scorned, kept her awake night after night. How terrible, then, it was to see him again—old, blistered, dull, and scratched, with one leg awry, his keys rough and soiled, and his carved music-rest full of sand!

But when he began to speak to her once more—though, indeed, he played only on two black keys and one blue one—her heart melted, and she completely broke down, weeping so that they thought her water-pipe had burst.

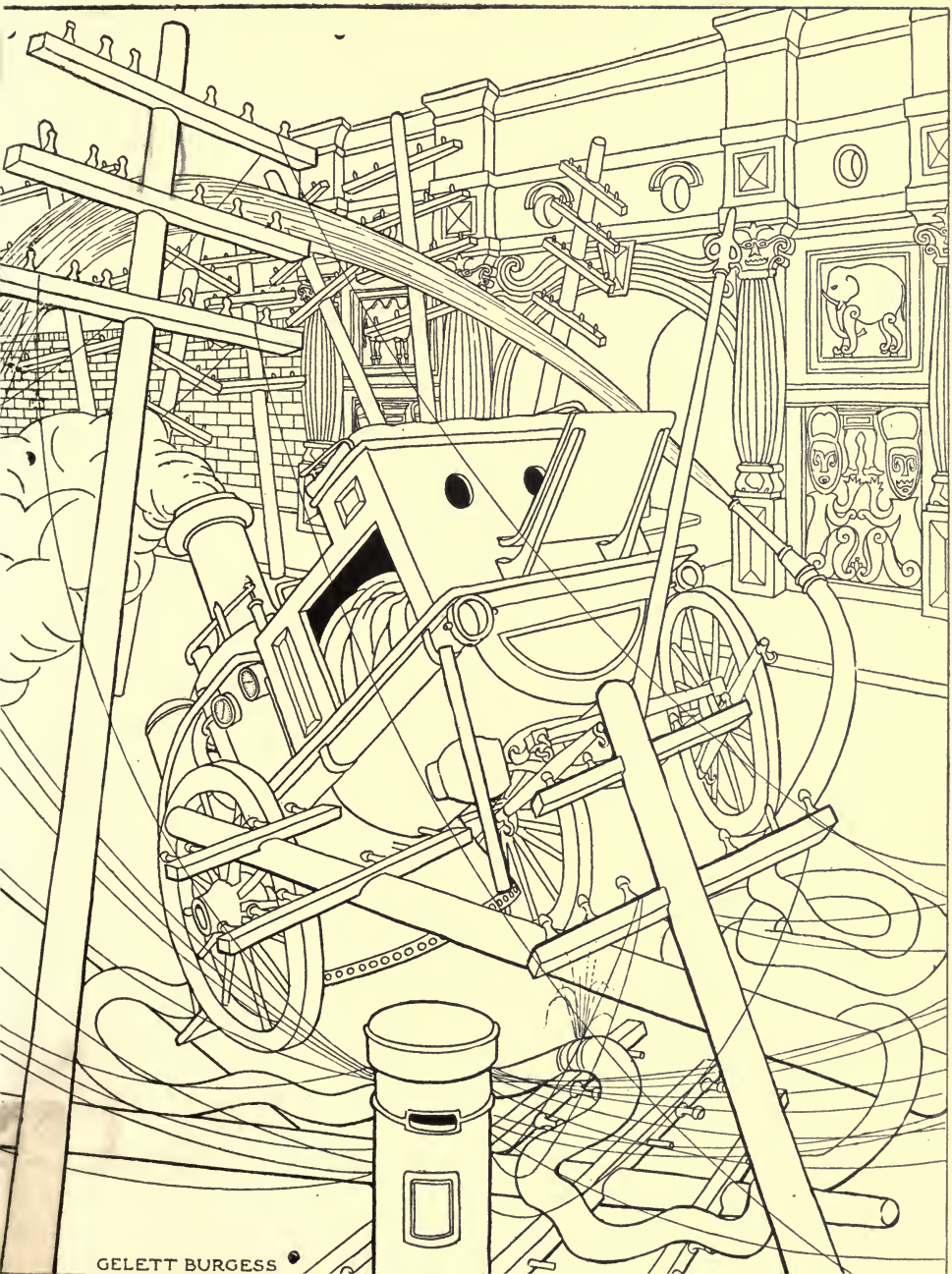
And so she found that she loved the piano, in spite of



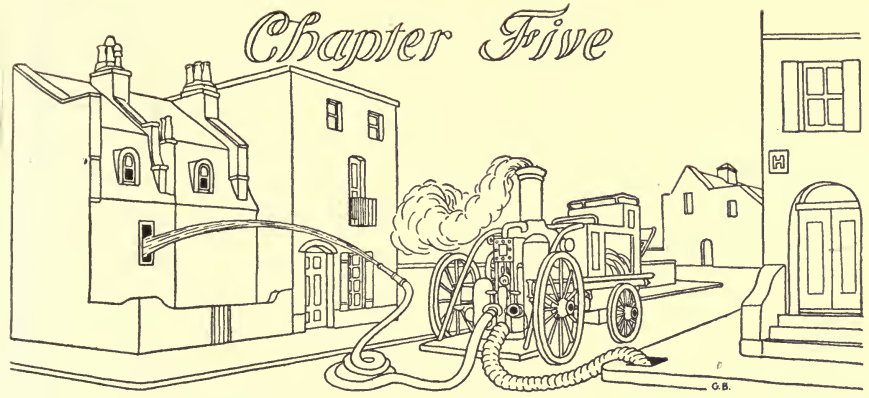
his miserable appearance, and they were married and lived happily forever afterwards, having two children, an Æolian harp and a hand organ.

But the old foghorn never stopped wondering why the windmill would refuse a handsome polished Very Grand Piano, with plenty of strings, and accept him after he was old and used up, and with only three strings to his name!

THE PERT FIRE ENGINE.


GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Five



THE PERT FIRE ENGINE

THERE were many fire engines, members of the Fire Department of the City o' Ligg; but of all the number, the most ill-behaved was the disreputable little Number Four. He was known all over the city as the black sheep of the flock, and every one knew the stories of his mischief.

In spite of his evil deeds, however, he was a very handsome machine, wearing a pretty coat of red enamel, and all his fittings were nickelled, so that they shone like silver buttons. He always had silken hose, too, for he was very rich. But he was usually the last engine at the fire, and he was always sure to shirk. He would hold back when he was signalled to "*Play away, Four!*" and he would squirt a stream strong enough to drench the Chief, when he should have held back. He consumed an

enormous amount of the most expensive fuel, and he wheezed and puffed till the air shook with vibrations. He could have been the best engine in the Department, if he had wanted to, but he didn't.

So the people of the City o' Ligg were not very much surprised when they learned that Number Four had run away. They hoped only that he would stay away, for they could get along much better without him. "He's more trouble than he's worth," said an old ladder-cart. "I've been tempted, more than once, to fall on him and break his boiler for him. He won't even have his hose darned, because he prefers to leak all over the street!"

For a few weeks Number Four enjoyed his truancy. He spent most of his time down by a lake, a little outside the city, and there he amused himself by going in swimming, and squirting water over himself like an elephant, till he shone brilliantly in the sunshine. When he was tired of that, he went around to the farmhouses, and sucked all the water out of their wells, and flooded their cellars. The stables were all very much afraid of him, but dared not complain, though they told their fences to catch him if they could.

Another favourite game of his was to fill his tank with water, and squirt it at the windmills, playing on their sails so as to make the wheels spin backwards. This

made many of the windmills so ill that they had to stop pumping for weeks.

But at last Number Four grew tired of this mischief in the country, and he began to cast about for something more exciting to do. So one night he loaded himself with water and rolled into the City o' Ligg.

He drew up before a little two-story house that was not painted, but only whitewashed, and began to squirt water all over her. The poor little house shut her doors and windows, but even then she was drenched to the skin, and after an hour or so, almost all her whitewash was soaked off, and she stood, cold, dripping, and shivering in the night air, with her naked boards streaked with white. The naughty fire engine laughed brutally at her distress, and went back to the lake to concoct more mischief.

Every night, after that, Number Four went into the town and drenched the houses, laughing, as he poured streams of cold water down their chimneys, breaking their windows, washing away their foundations, and splashing them all over with muddy water.

At last it got to be altogether too much to endure, and the houses consulted together to see how Number Four could be caught and punished. They could think of no way, however, and so, after the fire engine had showered

a very old and respectable church, and had given him a severe cold, they applied to the telegraph office to help them.

The telegraph office was by far the cleverest building in the City o' Ligg, but it took him some time to think of a remedy for this trouble. He consulted, by wire, with all the offices around Ligg, and at last they decided upon a plan.

Notice was sent out to all the telegraph poles to strip off their wires and come into Ligg for further orders. The next day the houses were surprised to see a procession of long, naked telegraph poles march into town, each with a roll of wire on its arm. They marched up to the telegraph office that night and received their instructions.

As soon as it was dark, the poles separated this way and that, going, some to one part of the town, and some to another, till the whole city was surrounded. For several hours, while the houses slept in peace, the poles worked, going in and out with the wires till they had woven a fence all round the town. At the principal entrances, they left the streets free for the fire engine to get in ; but they contrived big V-shaped traps here and there, which could be closed by the poles at a moment's notice. It was by this time twelve o'clock, the hour when Number

Four usually appeared, and when all the town was quiet the poles waited for the bad engine to come.

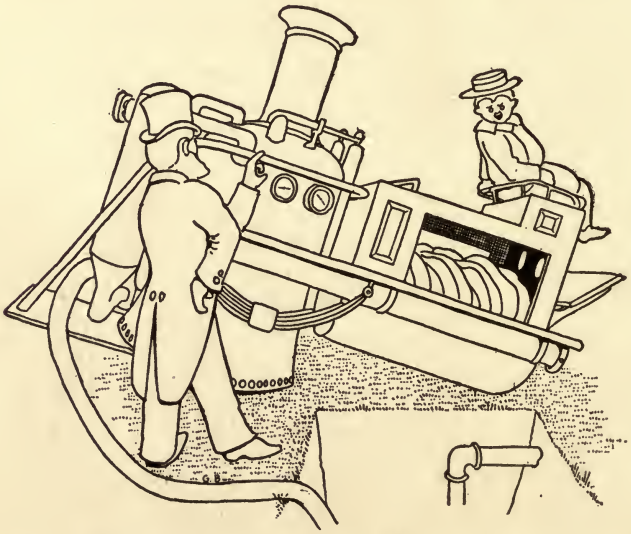
At last they heard the rumble of wheels on the road from the lake, and in the dark they saw a bright light approaching; it was the fire in the naughty engine, who was puffing his way into the town, chuckling to himself over the fun he was to have with the Town Hall that night; for he had planned to fill the whole of the third story with water before he came back.

Number Four came up to the city gate, with no suspicion of what was awaiting him, and boldly rolled up the main avenue, past the double line of sleeping houses. There was one house that was snoring with a rough noise, and the fire engine turned with a laugh and sent a stream of water through its window.

Suddenly the telegraph poles closed round him; they waved and towered over his head, they lay on the ground across his road, they threatened to fall upon him. The poor engine was terrified out of his senses. He backed and jumped, he whistled and groaned, and he spouted a black column of smoke out of his funnel, and sent streams of water in every direction. Suddenly, seeing an opening, he darted back toward the gate, but he soon found himself walled in by the wire fences. He tried another way and another, but there was no escape; the wires

hemmed him in on all sides, till finally he was stuck so fast that he could not move, and he stood panting, waiting to see what would happen next.

His wheels were tied, and his fires put out, and the next morning the poor shame-faced engine was pulled into town past the lines of houses, who jeered at him



scornfully. He was led into the Park in the centre of the City o' Ligg, and there, where all the principal buildings could see, he was severely scolded by the Mayor.

It was a long lecture, telling the whole story of his wickedness, and ending with the sentence that was to be inflicted upon him as a punishment. One by one they

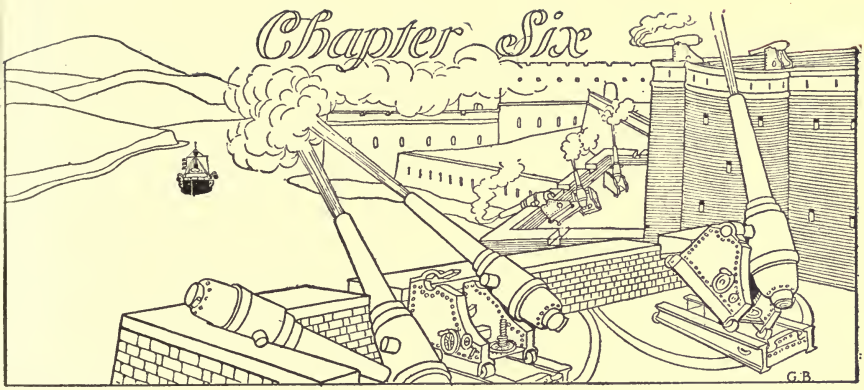
took off his bright red and gold wheels, they took off his pole, and whiffle-trees, his seat-cushions, and tool-box, and then they dug a deep hole in the middle of the Park, by the side of a well, put him in, covered him with dirt, and sodded over the burial place.

And so, now, when the tourist in the City o' Ligg compliments the Mayor upon the beautiful fountain that plays night and day in the middle of the Park, sending up a straight stream of water a hundred feet in the air, the Mayor says :

" Oh, yes ; quite so, quite so ! That is the naughty fire engine, little Number Four, working out his time of punishment. He was put in for twenty years, but if he behaves well, we're going to let him out in nineteen ! "

THE INSANE BATTERY.


GELETT BURGESS



THE INSANE BATTERY

The City o' Ligg scarcely needed any defenses, for the town was certainly quite able to take care of himself, with so many spirited inhabitants, but for all that there was a fort, with extensive earthworks, on the river side. In the fort lived two dozen cannon, and very ferocious guns they were. There were a dozen more field-pieces mounting guard in the earthworks, and it was this battery that once made a good deal of trouble.

Perhaps the guns were not altogether at fault, after all, but they certainly went crazy and did much damage. It was partly the Mayor's fault, for, being of an economical turn of mind, he decided to feed them with cobble stones, to save the expense of iron cannon balls.

It was not long before one of the largest guns fell ill, and he insisted that cobble stones disagreed with him. Very little attention was paid to him, for he was well

known to be a grumbler; but when, one after the other, all the rest of the cannon refused to eat more cobble stones, and lay about the fortifications, wheezing and sneezing and coughing, it was plainly to be seen that something must be done about it.

The whole battery was sent to be treated at the fort, where it lay about, groaning and barking, in great agony. Red-hot cannon balls and shells did no good whatever.

The guns swallowed tons and tons of powder, which were rammed down their throats with ramrods, but it seemed to be of no use, and the little caissons who waited on them and nursed them grew very much alarmed. One or two of the cannon blew up one night, with a loud, terrifying report, while in a violent fit of coughing.

At last, unable to stand the agony any longer, one of the field-pieces got up and wheeled down to the magazine, to see if he couldn't find something that would ease his pain, and there he discovered, in one corner, a large pile of dynamite sticks. He tried one, and it tasted sweet and fresh. "At any rate," he said to himself, "whether these are good for me or not, they can't be worse than cobble stones, and they taste much better, so I might as well die happily. I'm going to eat all I can!"

So he ate a dozen or more sticks of dynamite, and then went up to the hospital and told the other guns about it.

They all became much excited at the news, and resolved to do the same. "Who knows, it may do us good!" they cried.

So they all went down into the magazine, and began to eat dynamite. By and by they began to feel very queer. The youngest and smallest guns began to prance around the room in their carriages, and yell in loud, coarse voices. The older ones were not affected so soon, but after a while, they, too, began to feel very gay and silly, so that before long there was such a riot in the magazine that the mortars thought the place had exploded, and waddled away for their lives.

"Let's go into the town!" cried one of the cannon, and the words were no sooner out of his mouth, than the whole battery of them echoed, "Let's go into the town!" So they formed a disorderly procession, and rolling and wheeling in confusion, shouting and screaming, bumping and falling, they raced into town. By this time, it is needless to say, they were stark, staring mad!

At the City gate they fired a heavy salute, and then broke in with a yell. An old omnibus rolled up to them to see what was the matter, but when he saw the battery he took to his wheels and scuttled off. The guns began firing shots at him at short range, and drove him back, in great alarm, to tell the awful news.

The cannon now began firing at everything in sight. They shot the weathercocks off the church steeples; they shot patterns of ball-holes in the front of the town hall; they broke windows with grape, and they ploughed up the streets with canister. They tossed shells into the shops, and they blew the roofs off dwelling houses. They set fire to barns and stables, and they pounded the piers of the bridges to pieces. They blew up the sidewalks with shrapnel, and cut down all the trees in the Park close to their roots. Meanwhile, they were smoking and swearing horribly, while they loaded themselves with fury.

It was a terrible time for the inhabitants of the City o' Ligg! The town had not been so lively since the fire engine ran away. By morning, when the exhausted artillery had fallen asleep in the Park, there was not a human being in the City, for all had run away to the woods. Here the Mayor held a great mass meeting to see what could be done to prevent a continuation of the night's outrage. But no one had anything effective to propose, for no one dared to enter the town to do anything. If it kept up much longer, the houses would surely run away, and then where would be the City o' Ligg?

But there was a little boy there, named Yak, who was very valourous. He was the same who once tamed a

frightfully furious railway train, and though he was very little, he was a great friend of the Mayor.

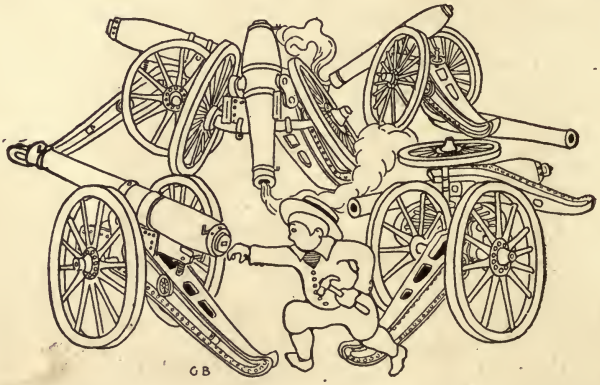
"I think I can do it," he said, "and all I want is a hammer."

So the Mayor gave him a hammer and his blessing, and Yak went all alone into the City o' Ligg.

It was nine o'clock in the morning, and the fieldpieces were still sound asleep, in the middle of the Park, by the fountain. They were snoring in a terrible manner, and all around the houses were trembling as if there were an earthquake on foot, for they were dreading the waking of the artillery. Some of the houses had already begun to move. The streets looked as if they had been deserted for one hundred and fifty-two years.

Yak, tightly clasping his hammer in his hand, stealthily approached the mad battery, which was sprawling in great confusion on the grass. Almost all the guns had gone to sleep in their carriages, but there were a few who had dismounted, and lay upon the ground. The little boy made his way carefully amongst them, and stepped up to the largest gun. With a single stroke he knocked off its sights, rendering the piece totally blind. Before he had quite awakened Yak was out of harm's way, and had attacked another cannon. The first was now thoroughly aroused, and, wild with pain and rage, began to fire away blindly, right and left.

It was a dangerous ordeal, but Yak's courage did not once desert him. He ran from one gun to another while they were still drowsy with dynamite, and finally succeeded in knocking the sights off them all, except the three upon the ground. He dragged their carriages away from them, so that they could not turn round, but would have to fire only in one direction. As by this time



they were the only ones who could see, they were in a ferocious rage, and implored their comrades to shoot the boy. But as the others could not aim, they sent cannon balls in every direction but the right one.

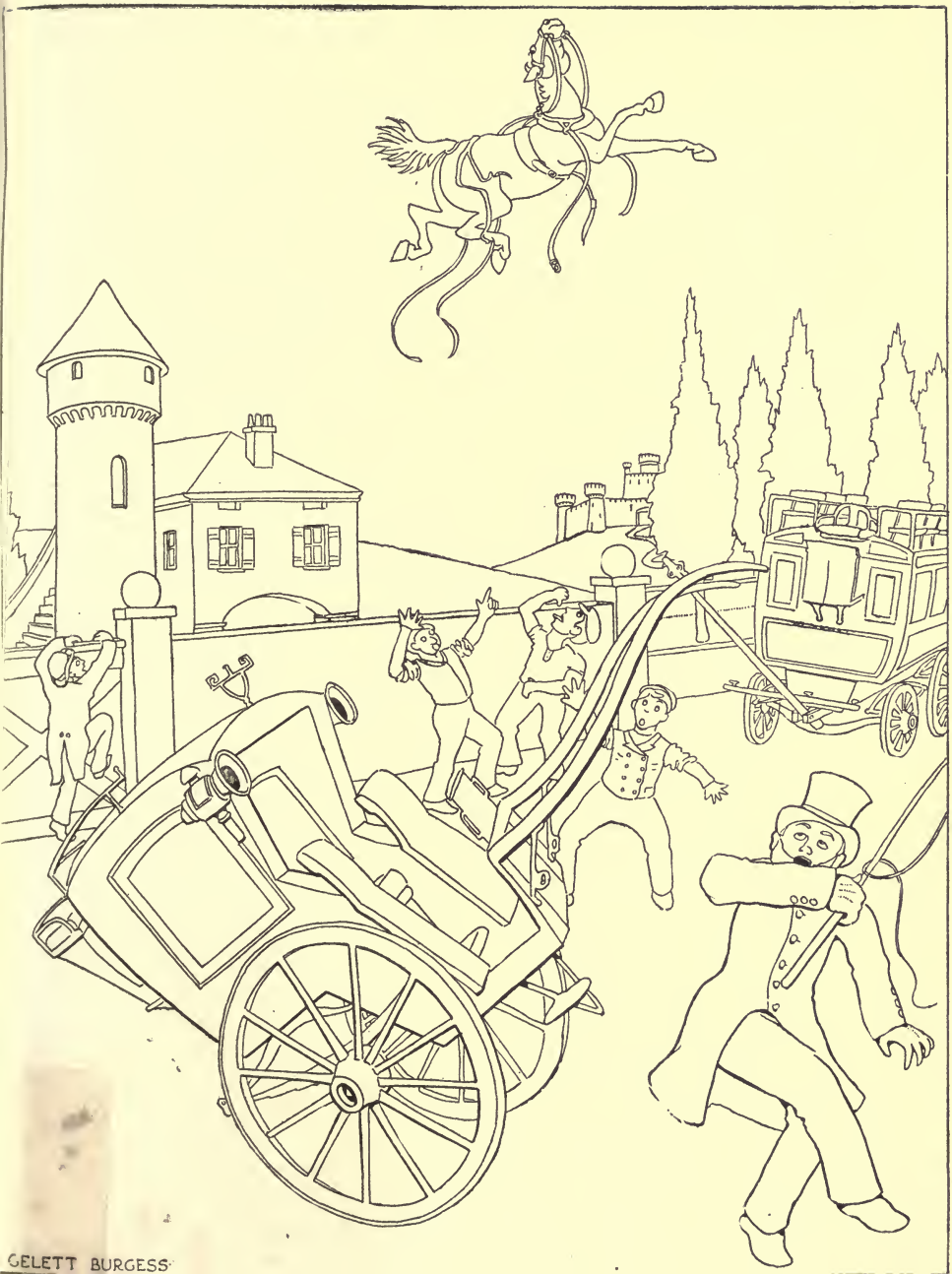
The fury of the battery was now awful. It fired right and left and into the air, hoping that some of the balls might fall on Yak. It made a most frightful banging, and the City was soon filled with clouds of smoke.

Yak's work, however, was not yet done. Alone and single-handed, at the risk of his life, he dragged the carriages this way and that and tied them down. His plan was to range them in two opposite rows so that they would shoot each other to little pieces. In this he was at last successful. One after another the guns were dismounted. As soon as one was left alone in the duel Yak spiked it, driving a nail into the touch-hole, till by noontime every gun was silenced or destroyed.

When the inhabitants at last dared to venture into the City o' Ligg, they found little Yak sitting on a gun carriage smiling, but so dirty that the Mayor hardly knew him. His face was black with gunpowder and smoke, and the only white things about him were his teeth and his eyeballs.

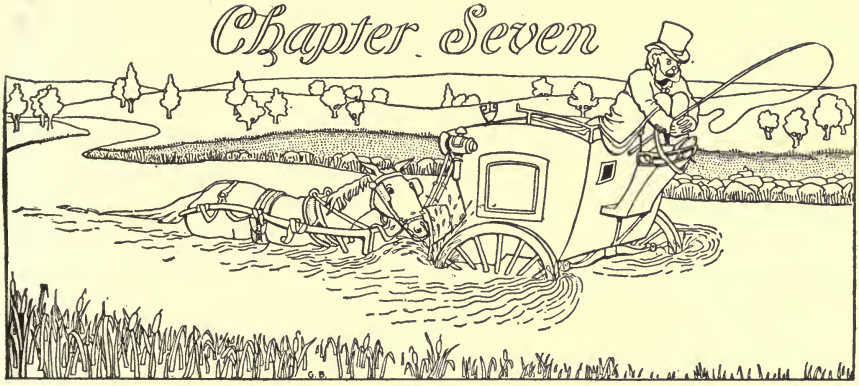
The Mayor of the City o' Ligg never tried to be economical after that.

THE HILARIOUS HANSOM.



GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Seven



THE HILARIOUS HANSOM

THERE was once, in the City o' Ligg, a splendid, vain-glorious hansom cab, with a blue body and yellow wheels. It was fitted up in the very best taste, having once been a private hansom, when it used to be driven by a coachman in livery. Now that it was only a hackney carriage, licensed to carry two persons, and with an ugly, white tariff list of charges fastened to its dashboard, it was in a perpetual state of dissatisfaction.

"To think that I should have to carry Tom, Dick, and Harry!" it said to itself. "I, who have been a private carriage! I'll show them that I still have spirit!" And it fairly jounced with indignation.

It used to misbehave itself so, that at last its driver hardly dared to drive it. The hansom would back and wheel, and toss him off his box, and behave in many

other disagreeable ways, so that the poor cabby had hard work in getting a fare. Every one shunned the blue hansom with yellow wheels, for the story of its pranks had spread over the City o' Ligg, and people said that such an ill-tempered cab was not safe.

The driver's trade fell off so that he decided to disguise the cab; so he sent it to a coach painter, and had it all painted as black as a beetle. When it came out again, all shiny with varnish, the hansom was so furious that, when they harnessed the horse in between the shafts, its lanterns flashed with rage.

All of a sudden, just as the driver was mounting the little seat behind, the hansom exerted all its strength, bent its shafts almost to the ground, and then with a terrible jerk threw them upward, breaking the traces, and tossed the horse a hundred feet high into the air!

The enraged driver took his whip and beat the cab unmercifully, but, of course, *that* did no good. The cab chased him all round the stable yard and came near pinning him against the fence. It clapped its little doors together and spun around in circles till the cabby yelled for help.

An old green omnibus rolled up to the stable and wanted to know what was the matter. After the driver had told him, the omnibus said: "Oh, I know how to fix

him! I've seen horrid hansoms before, and, as for that, they're all a pretty bad lot, these two-wheelers; one can never depend on them. You see, they have no brakes, and they're always letting their tempers run away with them. But the thing for you to do is to harness your horse in *backwards*, then the cab can't do anything at all!" But the omnibus did not notice that this hansom was one of the very few that have windows in the back; that makes a good deal of difference in a hansom cab, for then it can see behind it.

The driver thanked the omnibus very politely for his advice, and got twenty men to hold his cab while he harnessed another horse into the shafts, putting the head of the animal where its tail ought to be—facing the dash-board. The cab seemed by this time to be as gentle a vehicle as ever rolled on wheels. It was as quiet as a wheelbarrow, but it was a sly, 'cute hansom, and it was waiting for a good chance to get away.

It was a remarkable sight, when the cabby drove out of the stable yard, and the twenty men yelled with joy to see the hansom going backwards, pushed by a bewildered horse, and the driver in the little box, up in the front of the carriage, with the reins stretching out behind him. But he got along better than he had expected, hard as it was to steer around corners in this queer way.

Very few persons dared to try to ride in such an equipage, however, and by noontime the driver became very much discouraged, and started for home. Now it was very foolish of him to attempt to drive down hill with the cab before the horse, in this way, but he did not stop to think of the danger, and, before he knew it, he was on a heavy down grade.

This was just what the cab had been waiting for. It opened the window in its back, which was now its front, and, drawing a long breath, it dashed forward with tremendous speed, dragging the horse behind it so fast that the poor creature could hardly keep his feet on the ground, and was swept through the air in great, undignified jumps.

In vain the driver shouted for help. He tried to get down from the box, but he dared not risk a fall, so he clung to his seat with both hands, in terror, jolted to one side and the other as the hilarious hansom flew down the hill faster and faster. The cab was running away with him, and he dared not think what was going to happen next.

The road at the bottom of the hill crossed a wide river by a stone bridge. Just before the runaway reached this the cab sheered suddenly to the left, nearly throwing off the shrieking, terrified driver, and, with a tremen-

dous bound, jumped the wall at the side of the road, and plunged into the river.

The driver thought that the hansom could go no further, and he was preparing to dive into the water and swim for the shore, when the cab wheels began to revolve like paddle wheels with great velocity, and, churning the water into a froth of foam and bubbles, they sailed up the stream at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, like a new sort of steamboat.

Once sure they could navigate the stream with safety, the driver gave up all thought of escaping, and decided to see the adventure out. He turned his attention to the horse, who also seemed to be beginning to enjoy the trip. He had become very hot with such terrific exercise, and the bath was very refreshing, especially as he did not have to swim, but allowed himself to be towed along by the paddle cab, his tail streaming out behind.

Hours passed, and still they sailed up the river. At last, however, they could go no further, for a dam blocked the way. The cab floated around below the mill pond for a while, as if lost in thought, and then, heading for the bank, climbed upon the ground again, shook itself like a dog, and proceeded towards the mill.

It was a small mill, and a rather pretty one, with a flashing red wheel spattering the waters of the mill race

in every direction. This wheel seemed to fascinate the hansom cab. It gazed and gazed, and after a while the driver heard it say to itself:

"Ah, I, too, was once beautiful, when I had a blue body and yellow wheels! Now, I am all of a gruesome black, as ugly as a hearse! How I wish I could have those wheels; red ones are not nearly so pretty as yellow, but they are much better than black!"

So saying, the cab approached the mill, which was so busy grinding corn that it had not noticed the strangers. "Hello!" cried the hansom cab.

The mill did not stop for a little while, but it said, "Hello yourself!"

"What will you take for your wheels?" enquired the cab.

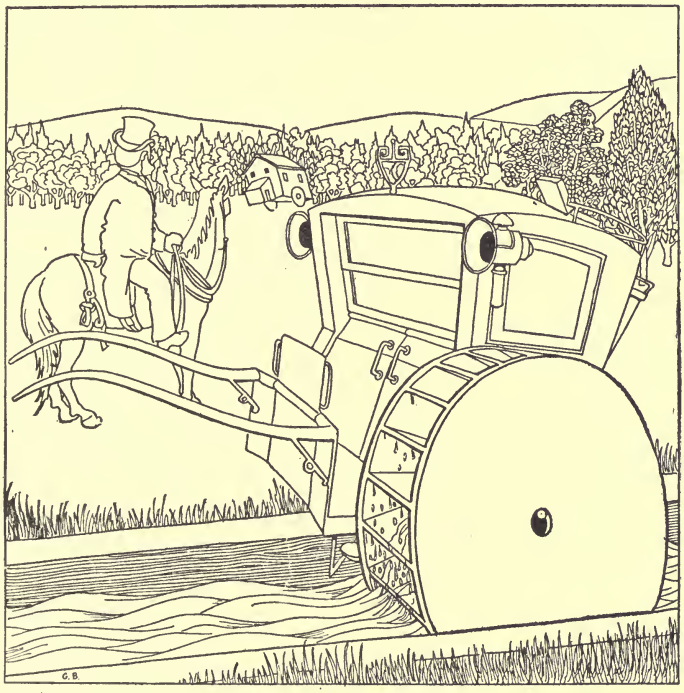
The mill stopped now, opened its windows, and looked at the hansom. "What'll you give?" it said.

"I tell you what I'll do," said the cab. "I'll exchange with you even; my wheels have rubber tyres, and they're remarkably easy on the axles!"

The mill was silent a while, and looked the cab all over, from shafts to roof. Then it winked one shutter, and said, "All right, I'll go you. You sit down beside me, here, by the mill race, where I can hand them to you."

So the mill moved along a little, and made room for

the hansom, which sat down and took off its wheels. Then the mill took off its own wheels, and put the hansom's on slowly, so that the cab should be ready first.



The cab looked very pleased as it tried on the red mill wheels, and spun them around merrily; but they would only go round one way.

"See here," it cried, "these are no good; give me mine back, will you!"

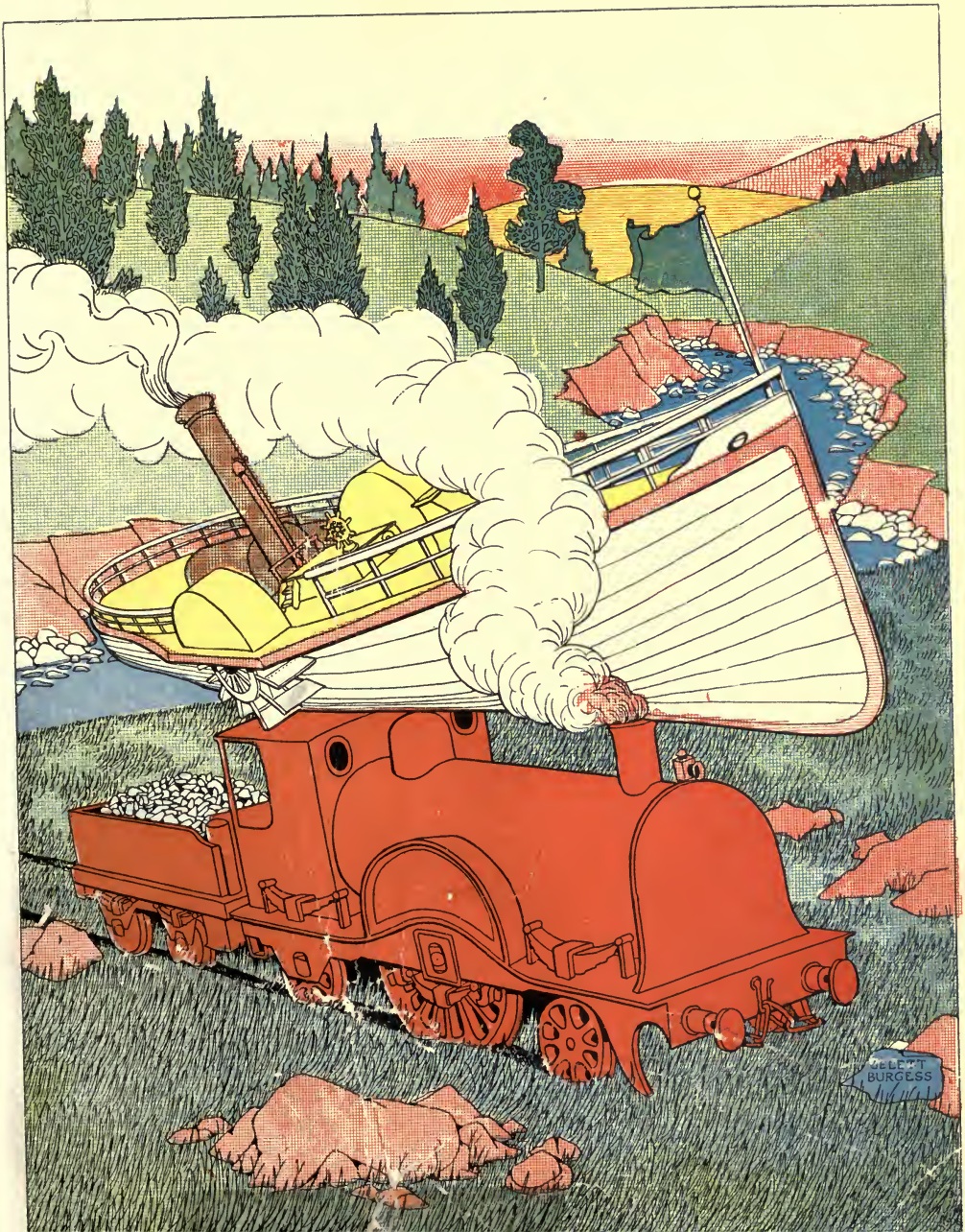
But it was too late. As soon as the mill saw its wheels on the cab, it slipped on the rubber-tyred wheels, and was up and off in an instant. The last thing the hansom saw of the mill it was disappearing in the forest a half mile away.

And, to its dismay, the hansom found that the paddle wheels not only would not go backwards, but they wouldn't stop to allow it to take them off, but kept spinning and spinning round, till the miller came along, and filled the poor captive cab full of corn, and set it grinding the mill's grist. And there the hansom cab had to stay for the rest of its life, grinding corn year in and year out.

The miller helped the cabby to unhitch the horse from the shafts, and was told the whole story of the vainglorious hansom.

"Well," said the miller, as the driver got astride his horse, ready to ride home to the City o' Ligg, "I expect it will serve the hansom right for having been so proud and vain!"

THE STEAMBOAT AND THE LOCOMOTIVE.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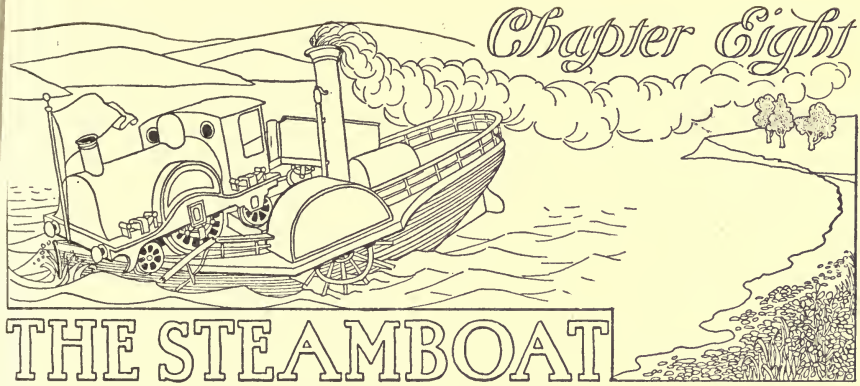


Chapter Eight

THE STEAMBOAT AND THE LOCOMOTIVE

On the railway that ran through the City o' Ligg there was once an English-made locomotive who was always discontented and grumbling. Nothing in the world was good enough for him; or, at least, nothing in the City o' Ligg.

His coal was too hard or too soft; it was never just right. He hated to pull passenger trains because he had to go so fast, and he didn't like to pull freight trains because they were too heavy. He was always complaining that he was out of order, so that he might stay in the Round House, and not work. He would shut himself on sidings in hopes he might be forgotten; he was afraid to go over bridges, for fear they would break down; and he hated tunnels because they were so dark and cold. He thought iron rails were too soft to get good hold on,

and he said that steel rails were altogether too slippery. Sometimes he declared that he wouldn't run where there were not modern metal ties, and at other times he asserted that the old-fashioned wooden sleepers made a much better road-bed. He quarrelled with his tender, and he refused to be coupled up to one that he didn't fancy. He snorted and hissed at the semaphores and point signals, and he was a nuisance to the railway in more ways than can be told.

But if he were bad, there was a young steamboat on the river who was worse. She was a very pretty craft, but that was no reason why she should insist on having a new set of paddle-wheels *every* year. She was absurdly particular about her funnel, and if it were not painted the exact colour that she fancied, she would declare that she would scuttle herself. She would roll and pitch with anger if they tried to back her. She would dig up the muddy bottom of the river with her paddles, and she gave a deal of trouble about steering.

When these two ill-natured creatures came together at the dock in the river, below the fortifications, they used to complain to each other till the cannon above them would cry, "Oh, I *say*!" and the bridge told them that they ought to be ashamed of themselves.

One day, after the steamboat had been carrying a load

of noisy excursionists up from the harbour, she found the locomotive on the pier in a very gloomy state of mind.

"I'm not going to stand this any longer!" he said. "They've put me to hauling coal, and it's no work for a machine like me, especially when I can't burn any of it myself. I'm going to run away!"

"Well, that's a good idea; suppose I go with you, and we'll set out together to seek our fortunes!" said the steamer.

They talked it all over, and finally decided to start that very night. The steamboat was to help the locomotive on the water, and the locomotive was to help the steamboat on the land. They were to share their wood and coal and water together, and have a jolly good time as long as they could.

At midnight the locomotive got on board the boat, and she steamed softly up the river. "This is fun!" said the locomotive.

"It's all right for you," said the boat; "but I must say you're heavier than I thought. Wait till it's *your* turn to give *me* a ride. I can't go very much farther, anyway, the water is getting shallow. There's a dam up above here, so I think we'd better go ashore now."

She climbed up the bank with the locomotive's assistance, and he then hoisted her up on top of his cab, and

set out across the fields. She was a little boat, but she was heavy, and the locomotive puffed away with all his might through the grass, stopping to rest once in a while. So they went on for several days, turn and turn about, for they had to cross several lakes on their way.

After awhile they began to approach a line of hills, and the ground grew steeper and steeper, till at last the locomotive could go no farther with the steamboat on his back. So she got off and scrambled along for a few miles with her paddle-wheels while the locomotive pushed her from behind. But the time came when they could neither of them go a step farther, and they lay on the ground exhausted. To make matters worse, they grew short of water and fuel. They cut down their rations to a ton of coal and a barrel of water a day, and even then they didn't have enough to take them back to either a forest or a lake.

It seemed likely that they would have to perish there on the hillside, and they quarrelled with each other peevishly, each accusing the other of being at fault for suggesting this terrible journey. The old river Wob and the railway of the City o' Ligg had never seemed so pleasant before, but, alas! it was many days' journey away.

Just as they had begun to think that all hope was

gone, one of them espied a dot in the sky. It grew slowly larger and larger.

"It is a *balloon!*" they cried together, and they both began to blow their whistles with all the strength of the little steam that was left in their boilers.

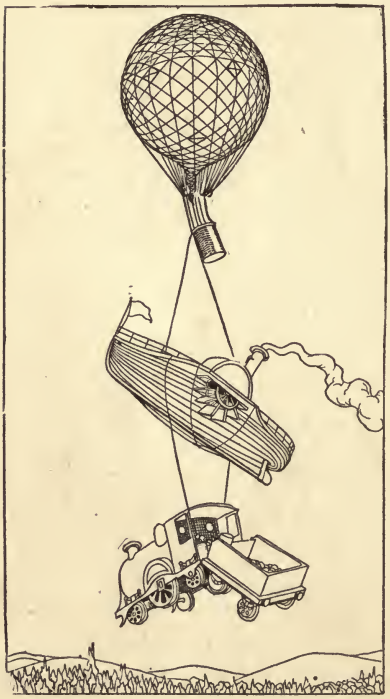
The balloon came nearer and nearer, till it had got within hailing distance, and then they saw it was laughing almost hard enough to split its sides. It was a very fat, pink, round balloon, and as it shook with merriment, its basket swung wildly above them.

"Well, I *declare!*" it cried out, "this is the queerest thing I ever saw! What in the world are you two doing away up in these mountains? I never saw a locomotive or a steamboat on top of a hill before!"

"For heaven's sake, please don't laugh like that," cried the steamer; "but come and help us, before we perish!"

The balloon finally consented to give them assistance over the mountains, and let down a rope, which the two tied around their waists. The balloon then rose, and the locomotive and steamboat were hoisted high in the air, and they all sailed away towards the East, across the range of mountains. They had floated for a half a day in this way, when the balloon gave a pull up, a little harder than usual, and the rope suddenly broke!

Down went the two, falling faster and faster through the air, and they both thought that their last moment had come. But by good luck they happened to fall in



the middle of a large forest, and landed safely in a great oak tree, without breaking a piece of machinery.

Yet they had, after all, escaped one danger only to fall into another. They were lost in an immense wilderness, and did not know in which direction to turn. The loco-

motive finally succeeded in climbing a tall tree, and made out smoke rising in the distance.

To this they painfully made their way, and, after a terrible struggle, they drew near—rusty, scratched, and smoky—and came to an old saw-mill by the side of a little stream. It was a hideous old mill, of a villainous aspect, that alarmed them both. But here was their only hope, and though they were far from any assistance in case of danger, the two unfortunate machines found themselves obliged to apply to the mill for shelter and fuel.

The mill welcomed them very hospitably, but there was something in his dusty, oily manner that the locomotive did not trust, and he resolved to stay awake and watch. The little, delicate steamboat was, by this time, too exhausted to notice anything. After they had drunk many barrels of water each, they revived a little, and the mill offered them a few tons of sawdust, which, he said, was the only fuel he could give them. At the first trial the steamer whispered to the locomotive that it tasted queerly, but they decided that it was only the oil in which it was soaked. At any rate, they had to eat that or nothing, and they made a meal of it without more ado.

Hardly had they burned the last mouthful, however, before they both fell into a heavy sleep, and knew noth-

ing for many hours. The locomotive was awakened by a sudden horrible pain, and he was terrified to find the teeth of a buzz-saw cutting through his side. He sprang up with a roar of agony, but it was too late; his left hind wheel had been bitten off! He charged furiously at the sides of the mill, and tore open a great hole, then dragged out the steamboat, and ran her into the forest as fast as his five wheels could carry him. The mill screamed and shrieked after them as they hurried away.

As they stood trembling in the forest, and thanked their stars for such a narrow escape, a sudden glare of light attracted their attention. The mill was on fire, set, no doubt, from some sparks dropped by the locomotive in its terrible struggle for escape.

By the light of the burning mill they made their way through the forest all night. With new fuel and water their strength had been partially renewed, and terror increased their efforts.

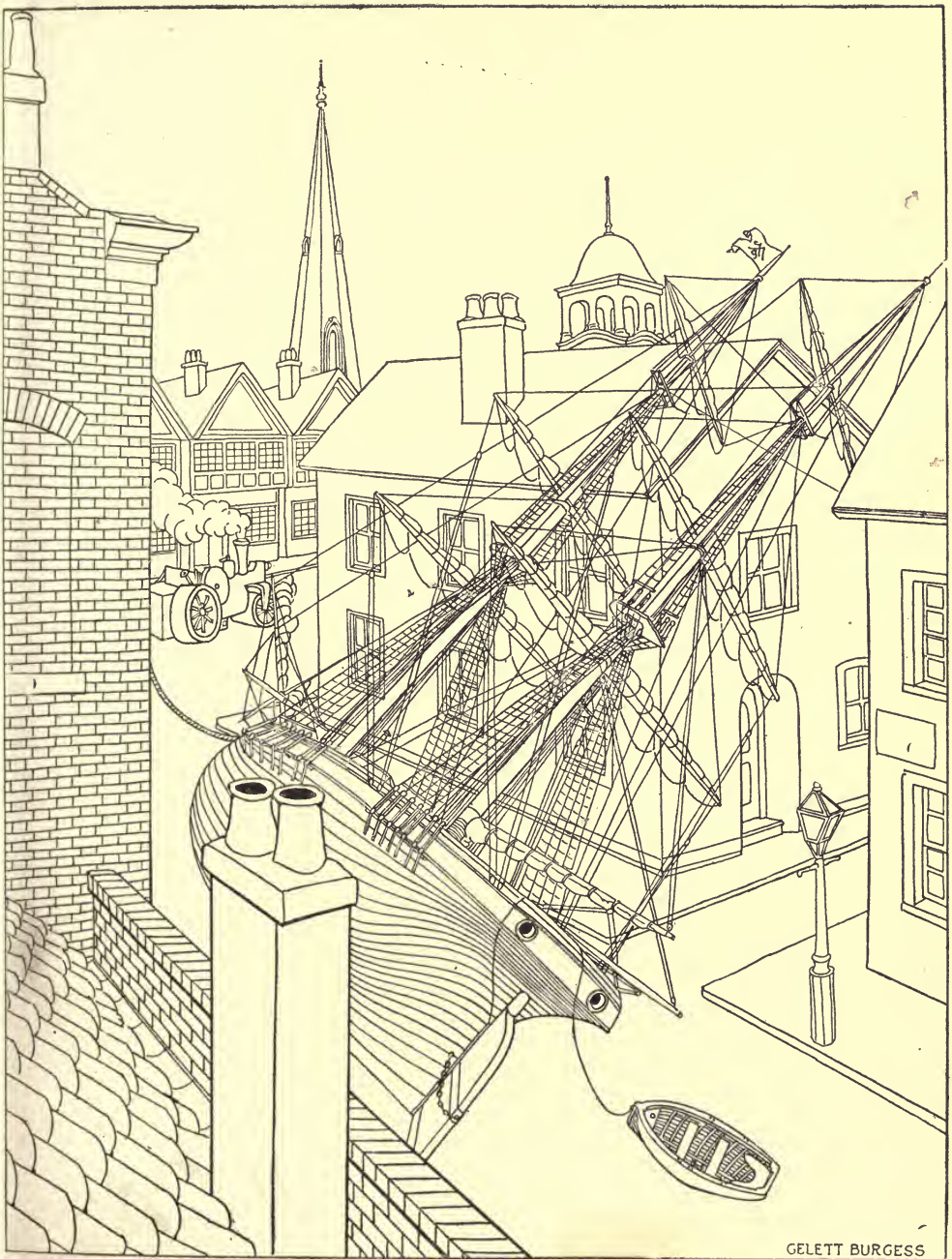
In the morning, after a short sleep, they awoke to find themselves by the side of a wide river, to which they had hobbled during the night, but had not seen in the dark. Alongside the bank of the stream ran a beautiful, level railway line. They looked and looked, hardly able to believe their windows. It was too good to be true!

It did not take them long to decide what to do. The

little steamboat gave one leap into the river, and whistled long and merrily. The locomotive crawled on to the line, and rang its bell in a joyous peal. For they knew by the looks of the country that they had been travelling in a huge semi-circle, and that the river and the railway led directly into the City o' Ligg.

So they steamed along, side by side, together, the lame locomotive and the sorrowful, shamefaced steamboat. That day one laid her head at last alongside the dock, and one puffed timidly into the station; both decided never to complain of any work that they should have to do in the future.

THE BOTHERSOME BRIG.


GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Nine

THE BOTHERSOME BRIG

THERE was a bold, boisterous little brig that came up the river Wob to the City o' Ligg twice a year, with a cargo of confectionery from foreign ports. Every June and every November she entered the harbour, waved her flag at the light-house on the island, gave her bow to the tug who came down to escort her up-stream, and, after twisting through the curly channel for a day, cast her anchor, and lay in the river, just off the rail-way pier, below the fortifications.

But this was all she ever saw of the lively City o' Ligg. There were but a few houses visible, and the spire of a church beyond, from whose belfry the chimes called out a welcome to her whenever she came to port; but the little brig had, of course, never seen the Town Hall, nor the Post Office, nor any of the wonderful buildings she had heard so much about.

Now, the last time the brig came to Ligg she found a steam-roller going back and forth on the new road by the railway pier, and whenever he stopped work she used to gossip with him about the sights of the city. He was a lazy old thing, was the steam-roller, and so fat and heavy that he could scarcely puff up and down over the gravel on the new road. It took too much effort for him to turn round when he had to return to the pier, and so he used to stop and then crawl backwards. Indeed, it would have taken as much room for him to have turned round in as would have been necessary for the brig herself.

"You're a queer old catamaran," said the saucy brig to him one day; "you ought to go to sea, where there's plenty of room to turn around."

"I'd like to, sure," said the steam roller. "They say the roads are pretty rough and lumpy in the ocean. I should think that they would need a deal of rolling!"

"Oh, we can all roll ourselves," said the bright brig.

"Really, I'd like to go," continued the roller. "I'm tired of this everlasting up and down, and back and forth, to and fro, forward and back, and all. Always in the mud, too! I'm positively filthy with this slime. I'd like to go in swimming and get clean! I believe I will! Do you think I could swim? I never tried."

"Of course you could!" said the bad brig. "It's as

easy as rolling! Go on in!" and she smiled behind her foresail.

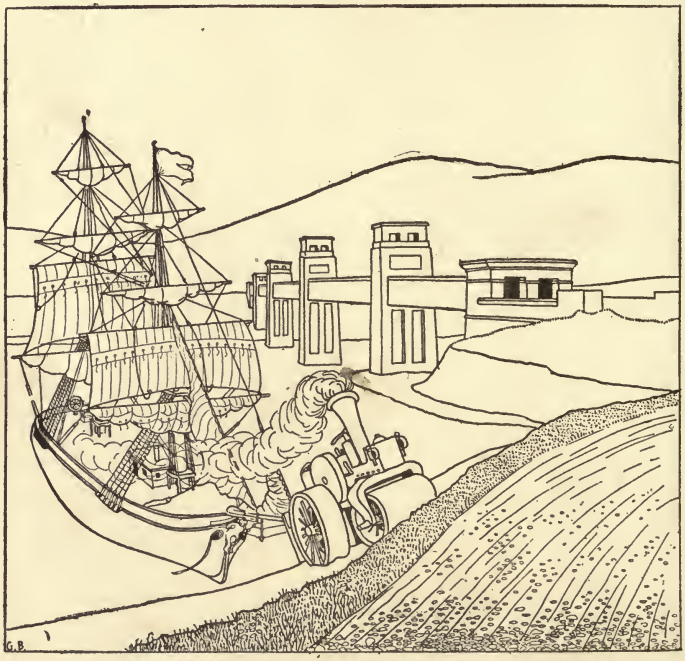
The stupid steam-roller, at this mischievous encouragement, started for the bank and rushed down with a rattle and slam, and after a short run brought up short, stuck fast in the thick mud at the edge of the water. Here he puffed and snorted, and great beads of water dripped from his round boiler in the effort to move, but it was of no use, he was mired. "Oh, help! *help!* I'm stuck!" he cried.

The brig moved over a little nearer and looked at him and laughed. "Well, well!" she said. "You do look like a pig in a pen! How are you ever going to get out, Roly?" Then, after watching his struggles for awhile, an idea occurred to her. "I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll take me into town, and show me the sights, I'll hoist you out of the mud and put you on the road again."

"All right," said the roller, glad of any chance to escape. So the brig set her topsails, and crept up to the edge of the stream, and then dipped her bowsprit under the wheel of the steam-roller, and pushed, and lifted, and pushed, till she got the machine up the bank again, and upon the roadway. It was no easy matter, however, and by the time the roller was back in place, the bow of the brig was aground. She passed him a cable then, and,

making it fast to the roller's boiler, she told him to go ahead.

The steam-roller pulled and pulled, and tugged and strained, till the brig feared that the rope would part, but



she was gradually moved out of the water, up the bank, and finally reached the new road.

"Ugh!" she said. "It hurts, rather, but I don't care; I'm bound to see this City o' Ligg I've heard so much about; so go ahead, Roly, and warp me up to the Park."

They started for the city, the roller puffing, hissing, and

rattling, and the keel of the brig scraping along the gravel road, lurching this way and that, poking her mast heads through the windows of the houses occasionally, and catching her yards in the lamp posts. Altogether they made a great hullabaloo, and all the cabs, omnibuses, and street-cars in town came rolling up to see what was the matter. They jeered at the steam-roller with great glee, for they had never seen him work so hard. He usually was seen leisurely smoking and waddling slowly up and down the street, stopping to rest after every trip, like a fat Dutchman promenading a piazza after breakfast.

"Go it, Roly!" they cried; and so the brig was followed by a great crowd to the Town Hall. Here the roller stopped to get his breath. "This is the Park," he said; "really, this is all there is worth seeing in the city. Don't you want to go back now?"

"Not much!" said the brig, who was enjoying herself thoroughly. "I want to see the whole town. Let's go up Queer-street!" The vessel pointed up a little road off the Common.

The steam-roller grumbled a good deal at this, but did not dare to refuse, and so they plunged up Queer-street, the brig rolling and pitching as if in a heavy gale, and the indignant houses, who had never seen a vessel before in

their lives, expostulating at the way she scraped the paint off their faces and broke their windows.

Now, not far from the church by the Park, Queer-street makes a turn at nearly right angles, and when they got to this point, it was impossible to get the brig round the corner, and she stuck fast, jammed in between the houses on either side of the street, being able to go neither forward or back.

"Now how are you going to get out?" said the steam-roller. "It's all your fault, for you *would* come up Queer-street. I can't pull you any farther!"

There was a house being built behind the telegraph office, and there was a huge scaffolding, with a platform and a tall derrick on top. The derrick swung its arm round over Queer-street, and it cried, "What's the matter down there? What in the world is that ship doing in the City, anyway?"

"I'm not a ship; I'm a brig," said the vessel. "Don't you see that I have only two masts? I wonder that I have any left at all, after this tight squeeze; it's worse than being caught in the ice!"

"Oh, I'll lift you out," said the derrick, good-humouredly, much amused at seeing a sailing vessel on such very dry land. "See here, you pass this rope around your waist, and I'll get you out."

So the brig tied the rope round her hull, and the derrick lifted her bodily out of Queer-street, and then, swinging round, lowered her gently into the main street again, opposite the Park. Meanwhile, the lazy steam-roller, seeing that, in the excitement, he was not observed, rumbled away, and got back to the new road by the river as fast as he could.

The brig was now high and dry in the middle of the main street, blocking the traffic, and unable to move an inch, for none of the motor cars was half strong enough to pull her out of the way. This would never do, however, and all the vehicles in town protested against the obstruction. The trains were blocked in a line nearly a mile long, when the little boy named Yak came along.

"Why don't you get out of the road, brig?" said Yak. "You've no business lying here in the fairway!"

"There's wind enough," said the brig, "but the water is too shallow! I'm hard aground!"

Then Yak went to see the Mayor. "I'll get the brig out of the road, if you'll order all the lamp posts in town to help me," he said.

"All right," said the Mayor, and he made out the order. When all the lamp posts were assembled in the Park, Yak had their lamps removed, and led them along the street, and made them lie down in the middle of the road, the

first one directly under the brig's cut-water, and the others along down the street as far as the river.

Yak then boarded the brig and helped her set her sails. When her canvas was all unfurled he cried to the motor cars behind to push as hard as they could. The brig moved forward and soon touched the first lamp post which rolled under her keel, and after that she went forward easily, under full sail with a fair wind, down the main street of the City o' Ligg.

The lamp posts made a great outcry at this, and whined dismally ; but, of course, being of cast iron, they were not really hurt at all. Now, Yak had laid them in the road very carefully, ten pointing to the right and the next ten pointing to the left, head to head, or, rather, where their heads would have been if the lamps had not been removed. In this way, the posts being larger round at one end than the other, the brig sailed forward in curves, first to port and then to starboard, as if she were tacking and beating against a head wind. As she zigzagged down the street all the windows waved their curtains at her, and the motor cars in her wake set up a hilarious toot-tooting. There had never such a gay sight been seen on the streets of the lively City o' Ligg.

But there was one thing that Yak had forgotten. He had laid the posts along the main street to the river very

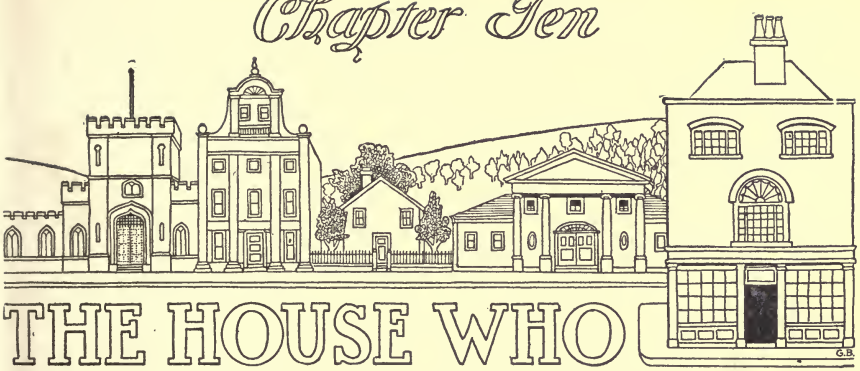
cleverly, but he had not remembered that it was above the bridge, and so, when the brig, amid the cheers of the waggons and motor cars, took her triumphant plunge into the stream and, happy to feel again the soft, cool splashing of the water along her keel, set off gaily towards the harbour, she brought up, bang! against the old bridge and nearly lost her foretopmast! It was no use, she could never get down the river to the sea again.

And so there the bothersome little brig remains, a captive in the river Wob, like an insane lioness, a prisoner in the cage of a menagerie, sailing back and forth all day long, from one year's end to another.

THE HOUSE WHO WALKED IN HER SLEEP.


GELETT

Chapter Ten



THE HOUSE WHO WALKED IN HER SLEEP

THERE had always been a good deal of gossip about the little white house with the green blinds, ever since she had moved to the City o' Ligg. A great many of the buildings were distrustful of her, and they whispered all sorts of things to each other.

To be sure, the little house had always behaved with the greatest propriety, but there was much comment upon the fact that *she had no stable*, which the buildings regarded as suspicious! There had once been a stable where she stood, but it had mysteriously disappeared long ago.

Besides this, none of the other houses knew exactly where she had come from. She replied, vaguely, "From the country," when any of the buildings asked her directly, but this was undoubtedly an evasion. It was, moreover,

not easy to question the demure little white house with the green blinds, for she had a way of making the others think that perhaps it was none of their business, after all.

But when, one morning, the houses woke up and found that the little house, who had been white the day before, had turned *blue*, there was great excitement among the buildings of the City o' Ligg. None of them dared ask her the reason why she had changed her coat, nor how she had done it so quickly, but the houses fairly hummed with gossip, and the story was told from one street to another. That happened on Monday morning, and they were still more surprised when, on Tuesday morning, they found the little house was *yellow!*

Surely something must be done about it, and so an old baker's shop asked her to explain how and why she had changed colour during the night. The little house treated the shop very politely, but only said:

"Upon my word, I honestly have no idea how the thing happened! I went to sleep quite as usual, and when I woke up in the morning I was a different colour. If you can explain it, I'd be very glad to know myself!"

The houses all scoffed at the idea of her being so innocent. *Of course* she knew all about it, and she ought to be exposed, for it would not do to let such a scandal go on! So they sent to the Police Station and complained

of the little house, and that night she was carefully watched by a very respectable old Church.

At midnight the Church saw the little house give a shudder, and move uneasily on her foundations. But her windows were blank and without expression; she was undoubtedly asleep! The little house's door yawned, and she slowly began to stir. She crawled down towards the rear of the yard, and began moving through the garden and across the fields.

The old Church followed her as she made her way out of town into the open country. They came at last to a range of low hills. The further side of these hills was dotted with patches of woods, between which the little house went, till at last she came to the shore of a small lake of red paint.

The Church hid behind a clump of trees and peeped out to see what the little house would do next. What was his astonishment to see her sit down on the bank beside the red lake and calmly take off all her doors and all her blinds and then plunge into the paint! Her windows, however, were still blank and shut; there was no doubt about it; the little house was swimming in her sleep!

After staying in the red paint for about half an hour, the house came on shore again and stood in the moonlight, all red and dripping. When she had dried, she put on

her blinds and doors, smoothed down her slates, and proceeded home, followed by the astounded Church.

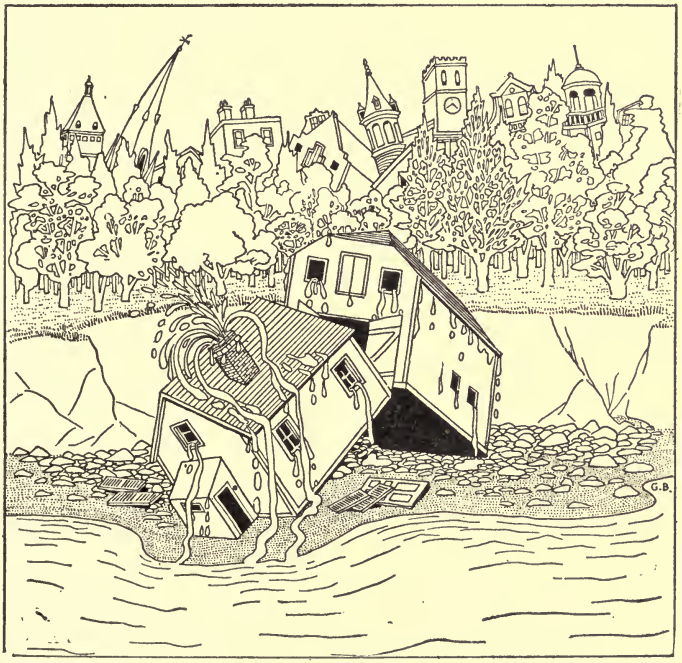
The next day he told the Post Office the whole story, and they consulted together as to what should be done about the matter. Surely this sort of thing should not be allowed to go on. They decided, therefore, to appeal to the Police Station, who directed that a high fence be be built around the little house, and that night all three of them sat up to watch.

At midnight, as before, the little house began to stir. She moved over to the fence in the rear of the yard, and seemed at first unable to understand what stopped her progress. But then she ran against the fence, pushed it violently down, and escaped, followed by the Church, the Post Office, and the Police Station.

Over the hills and through the woods they chased the little house, but this time she took a slightly different direction, which led her finally to a lake of *green* paint. Here the same thing happened as before, to the great astonishment and embarrassment of the three spectators.

So this was how the little house was able to afford a different coat of paint every night! The three buildings that watched her would have gone bathing in the lake themselves, no doubt, but none of them could swim. at least, not while awake; there is no knowing what they might have been able to do in their sleep.

The next night the little house went to a lake of *brown* paint. By this time the whole City o' Ligg was excited about her, and all sorts of rumours were floating around the streets and avenues. Some buildings said the little house was in love with a paint mill, who gave her a new



coat every night; but why the house's blinds and doors were always green, no one but the Church, the Post Office, and the Police Station could explain.

At last the fact leaked out that the little house was a

somnambulist, and went a-swimming in lakes of coloured paints, and that night the whole City o' Ligg followed her when she started out at midnight. They streamed across the fields and hills after her—houses, churches, stores, shops, inns, factories, public buildings and edifices of every description, till where the City o' Ligg had been was nothing but one big honeycomb of cellars, and all to see a poor little house go swimming!

This time she led them to a beautiful *purple* lake, and while the thousands of buildings waited upon the bank, she took off her doors and took off her blinds, and splashed and spattered in the paint, as if she were a hundred miles from the nearest house, and quite alone in the forest!

Suddenly in diving she struck something hard on the bottom, and feeling for it caught hold and dragged it to the surface and pulled it ashore. It was her long-lost stable!

The stable immediately awoke her, and the thousand spectators shook with laughter to see the bewilderment of the little house. The two dripping purple buildings, however, were too happy to notice the peeping audience behind the trees, and they embraced each other with touching fondness. They then sat down and, after blowing the purple paint out of their chimneys, told each

other the stories of their lives, since they had been separated.

The buildings on shore became, now, so much ashamed of their cruel and unjust suspicions, and so affected by the happiness of the little house that, one by one, they stole away to the City o' Ligg, and decided not to say anything to the little house about their own disgraceful part of the affair.

And so when the house and her faithful stable returned to town and took their old places, no one asked the explanation of her new coat or her new stable. There they stand to this day, and these loving purple buildings are the most respected edifices in the whole of the City o' Ligg.

THE BOLD BALLOON.


GELETT BURGESS
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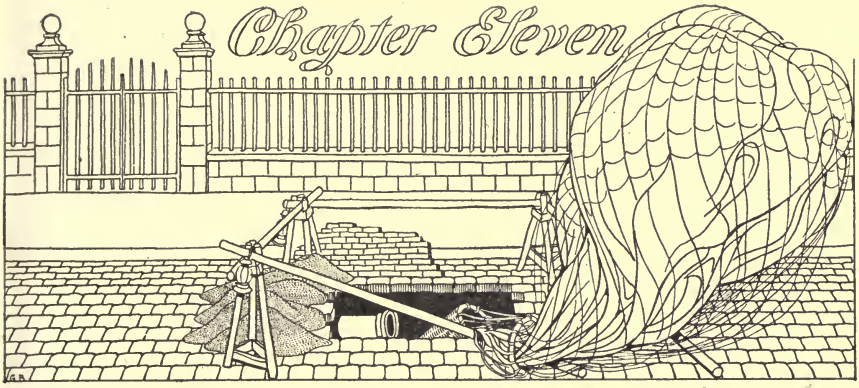


THE BOLD BALLOON

THE flock of balloons who dwelt up in the mountains to the North-east o' Ligg was cordially hated by all the inhabitants of the City. They were a lazy, useless lot, and never did anything but amuse themselves. They were all fat, and generally very prosperous, but they were by no means intelligent, and the citizens in town called them mere "bags of wind."

There was one amongst the flock who was particularly disliked, for he was almost the only one who ever came into town, and when he did it was always for some mischief. The City clocks used to make faces at him when they saw him coming, but he paid them well for that by twisting their hands round the wrong way, till they struck all sorts of hours at once. When you heard a church chime ring out six bells in the middle of the day,

you might be sure that the bad balloon was in town, and up to his old pranks.

The balloon, however, preferred tickling big heavy churches in the small of their ridgepoles till their steeples writhed. When he was not doing that, he was usually dropping stones on the roofs, or emptying sandbags into chimneys, and pretending it was only an accident. He was very careful not to interfere with the windmills, however, for once when he was trying to annoy one she struck at him savagely with her arms, and wounded his basket so that he didn't dare to come into the City o' Ligg for several weeks.

His tricks became such a nuisance, finally, that the houses insisted that he must be captured. It was hardly safe to go to sleep at night, for fear of that bad balloon coming round your roof and scratching your tiles the wrong way.

They prevailed upon the Fire Department to try to catch him, and the engines tired themselves out squirting at the balloon. When, at last, they did succeed in turning a stream of water on him, he only laughed at them. He was made of oiled silk, and was used to being rained on, and didn't mind having a bath in the least.

The artillery tried next, but they couldn't come anywhere near hitting him. Besides, the cannon balls that

they fired into the air had come down again, and they usually came down upon the roofs of the houses, which was a good deal worse than being scratched by a comparatively harmless balloon, or even hit with his drag-anchor.

The houses had given up all hopes of catching the balloon, when he got himself into worse trouble than they had been able to make for him. He came in one day, and was having great fun with the Town Hall, when a gust of wind struck him, and blew him past the cupola, and, the first thing the balloon knew, he was punctured by the weather vane, which tore a great rent in his side.

The gas slowly oozed out of the silken bag of the balloon, and he collapsed and fainted dead away. There was great rejoicing among the houses at this. Nothing could have been more fortunate for them, or worse for the balloon. A long ladder finally succeeded in getting him down from the cupola, and he was left in the street until the buildings should decide what to do with him.

The balloon recovered his senses late that evening, and found himself alone, lying in the street in front of the Town Hall. He bewailed his fate bitterly with what strength was left him, and thought what a fool he had been to come into the town when he might now have been

playing amongst the clouds and the rainbows high above the mountains outside the City o' Ligg! He tried to turn over, but his wound pained him and his basket was sore from being thrown down from the cupola.

He lay there for a while, moaning softly, when it seemed to him that he smelled gas somewhere about, and this hope immediately revived his spirits. He lifted himself as well as he could and looked about him. Only a few feet away from where he was lying he saw a great hole in the street. He crawled over to this and looked in. What was his excitement to see down in the hole a gas-pipe that was being repaired!

He got his basket and his anchor down into the hole and worked away with all his might. It was getting light now, and if he was to escape at all he must hurry, for he was sure that in the morning they would send for a mowing machine and cut him up into little pieces.

After an hour's hard work he had bitten completely through the gas-pipe, and had laid his valve over the orifice. Slowly his silken bag filled with gas, and his strength returned. But try as he might he found he could not fill himself more than half-full, and so, at last, fearful of being discovered, he wobbled away down the street as fast as he could, flapping and waving, the most disreputable balloon imaginable. He made his way to-

wards the country, but, after travelling a mile or so, he found he could go no further, as he leaked so badly.

He had reached a farm-house on the road to the hills, and rustled into the yard to see whom he could find to help him. In the yard was a rusty sewing machine.

"Good morning," said the balloon.

"How do you do?" replied the machine; "and who are *you*?"

"I am a circus tent, and I've come to ask you to sew me up, please. A steam calliope ran into me, and tore this big rent, as you see!" And the half-empty balloon made himself stiff and angular to look like a tent.

"Where is your pole?" said the sewing machine.

"Oh, I broke my pole," said the balloon.

"What are you going to do with that basket?" said the machine.

"Never mind; will you help me or not?"

"I'll help you on one condition, and that is that you go to the Electric Power House and steal a little dynamo to be my slave. I always did want to be run by electricity!"

As she absolutely refused to sew him up till he had done this, the balloon had to stay there till the next night, and then hobble back into town, and try to kidnap the dynamo. He set out as soon as it was dark, and by midnight he had got to the Power House.

It was very dark inside, for the electric lights always went out at twelve o'clock, and he got in through the doors they had left open, making himself as small as possible in the hallway, squeezing through passages with great difficulty and pain.

He had just reached the dynamo room, when a sizzling blue flame flashed, and he fell on the floor with a stinging pain darting through him, while the air seemed full of

violet sparks. He had stumbled across a live wire and had received a terrible shock.

In the morning they found him there unconscious, but he never recovered, and expired without knowing what had killed him.

It was rather a disappointment to the Fire Department, for they had decided to harness and halter the balloon, and tie him up above the Park by a long rope, so that he might be used to hold their hose when the tops of the houses caught fire.

THE LAZY LAMPPOSTS.

GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Twelve

THE LAZY LAMPPOSTS

THE lamp posts on Queer-street were the most disorderly in the whole City o' Ligg. They went out when they should have been attending to duty, they smoked, and they gambolled. In other parts of town the lamp posts were sedate and well-behaved, and stood in perfectly straight rows, like columns of soldiers marching down the streets. They tried by every argument they could think of to make the Queer-street lamp posts behave properly.

"See here," said the elder ones, "you fellows think you are awfully clever and smart, I suppose, to cut up such shines, but you'll be taken down, some day, and they'll put up electric light poles instead, the first thing you know! *Then* you'll wish you had behaved! You're

getting us all into trouble, and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves!"

But the Queer-street lamp posts flared up at this; they made light of the rebuke, and said "*they* didn't care, they were going to have their fun while they were young, and the other fellows could just shut up preaching like prigs!"

So they lolled and loafed around on the corners, and winked at the hansom cabs as they passed by, and bowed mockingly to the omnibuses, and they beckoned to the bicycles with their little short arms, till they made a great scandal of their behaviour throughout the whole City o' Ligg.

One dark night, one of the silliest of them suggested that they should all go to the Park, and play hide-and-seek. No sooner was this foolishness proposed than the whole twenty-seven lamp posts started in a tipsy procession down Queer-street, jostling each other, knocking each other down, scrambling, waltzing, reeling, climbing on top of each others' shoulders, jumping fences, ringing door-bells, rollicking, frollicking, bouncing, jouncing, hopping, flopping in the wildest kind of a hullabaloo, towards the Park. They were like a lot of puppies that had just been unmuzzled.

Then they began the tipsiest game of hide-and-seek

that ever was played. All but one put out their lights, and that one chased the others all over the Common. They jumped over trees, and they crawled under benches; they got up on the roof of the Grand Band Stand, and they hid in the Frog Pond, and stuck their lanterns out of water to watch.

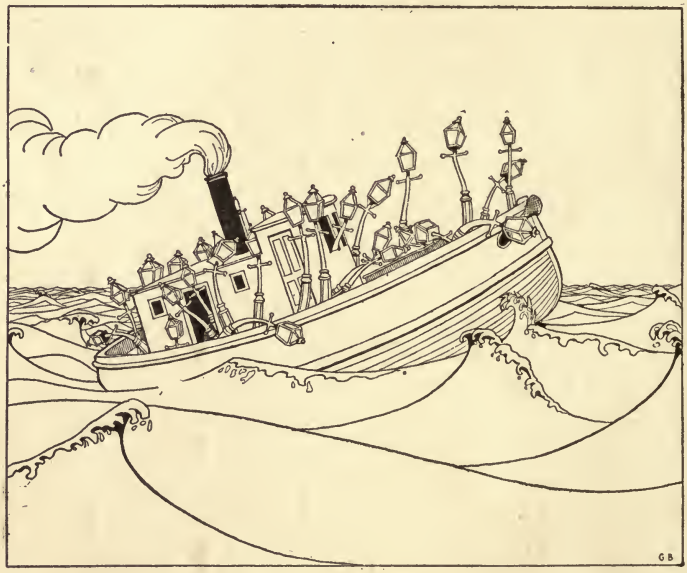
While the fun was at its height, a little policeman suddenly appeared and arrested the whole twenty-seven, and tied them together by threes. Then he opened a sewer-pipe and locked them in, while he went for help.

Now, the sewer-pipe led to the river, emptying into it about a mile or two below the City o' Ligg. The lamp posts succeeded in untying their fastenings, and immediately began to crawl through the slimy hole, in the dark, one behind the other, and, after many hours, they crawled out upon a sand bar, in the middle of the river, half drowned, and as dirty as worms.

They would have stayed on the island till they froze to death, if it hadn't happened that a tug came along just then. Of course, they didn't dare to go back to the City after such an escapade, but they didn't know where else to go. Now the tugs in the river Wob were not noted for their good-nature, and the lamp posts might have known, if they had not been such giddy, light-headed things, that tugs were not to be trusted.

The tug whistled to them, "Hallo! what are you muddy lamp posts doing there on that bar?"

The lamp post who had first suggested the lark answered, "We set out to have a torch-light procession, but we got lost."



The tug pretended to believe this very improbable story, and cried, "You come and get aboard me, and I'll take you to a good place where you can get plenty of oil!"

So the twenty-seven climbed aboard over each other's shoulders, and the tug put off down stream. As they

reached the harbour, the little vessel began to roll frightfully, and the posts became exceedingly seasick. Some of them tried to get off to wade ashore, but the water was so deep that they were afraid.

Finally, the tug steamed up to an island where there was a white revolving lighthouse, and rolled them all into shallow water, and shot away hissing and bubbling with laughter. They all struggled ashore, and waited on the beach, wondering where they were and what to do.

As the lighthouse turned slowly around, like a searchlight, its rays flashed upon the group of homesick, seasick, shivering lamp posts, and he called out, "Hallo! come up here, whoever you are!"

The posts struggled across the sand of the island, very much ashamed of themselves.

"Well, well," said the tower, "you are a queer set of little lighthouses, *you* are! Who are you, anyway?"

The spokesman of the party told him their story, and begged the lighthouse to give them oil, for their lamps were almost famished. This the lighthouse did, for he was a good old soul, and had been young himself. The lamp posts drank the oil greedily, and they grew brighter.

While they were thus engaged there was a cry from the tower. "Oh, heavens," the lighthouse cried, "something has happened to me; I can't revolve! What shall

I do? There's a man-o'-war due into the harbour, and she'll go on the bar if she can't see my light! There! Look! There are her rockets, now! Heavens! what *shall* I do?"

The lamp posts looked up, and there was a blue light off by the bar, sure enough. They consulted together hastily. Here was their time to retrieve their good name. They would go out and save the man-o'-war! It would be a dangerous venture, for the tide was running swiftly; but they could do no less than try.

They ran as fast as they could down to the beach opposite the bar, and, wading in boldly, carefully pushed their way through the waves. At every step the water grew deeper, and they feared that every moment some billow would put out their lights and wash them off their feet. But they kept on bravely, and at last the water grew shallower, and they reached the buoy in the middle of the bar, waist-deep in the rushing tide.

The buoy was ringing the bell with all her might. "Good work!" she cried. "Now stand in a thick group altogether, and the ship will see you."

There they stood, the twenty-seven courageous lamp posts, like a hollow square of soldiers, slanting this way and that, as the waves broke over them, their flames flaring and flashing in the gusts of wind, and the sand

crawling under their feet. At last the tide turned, and it was more comfortable.

"*Boom*!" went the gun from the man-o'-war. "Thanks!"

The lighthouse, which had now fully recovered itself, and was able to revolve, flashed convulsively, as if it were sobbing with emotion and gratitude.

As soon as the ship had come to anchor, she sent a launch out to the bar, and took the twenty-seven lamp posts on board, proud and happy, but very wet and cold.

"Good-bye!" they cried to the bell-buoy.

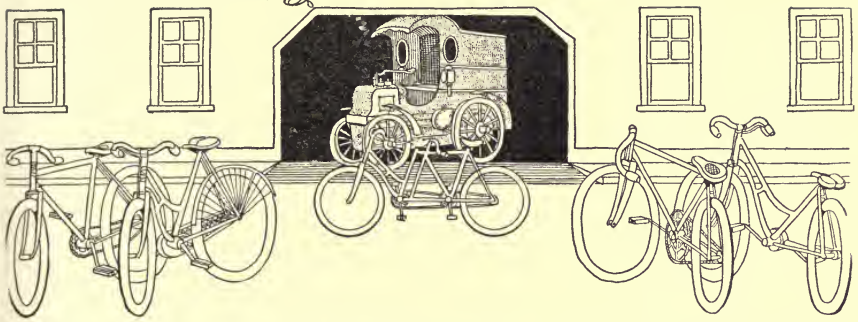
"Good-bye!" she replied, and nodded a farewell.

They were carried up to the City o' Ligg in triumph, by the very tug who had betrayed them, and were met by the Mayor and populace with a brass band. They were marched into the Park, opposite the Town Hall, where they received a little lecture, but were forgiven for their noble service, and sent back to Queer-street, where they have behaved themselves perfectly, ever since.

THE BICYCLE'S FAMILY.


GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Thirteen



THE BICYCLE'S FAMILY

The bicycles were, perhaps, the cleverest and best educated members of the inorganic society of the City o' Ligg. The bicycles looked down upon the tricycles, and, in fact, upon all three and four-wheeled vehicles, and they did not associate even with hansom cabs, who wore their wheels side by side.

Mr. Diamond Frame was a leader in bicycle circles, and was proud of his family and connections. He was mechanically perfect, a very high-grade wheel, and his father, Kangaroo, was one of the original Safeties, while, on his mother's side, he was descended from one of the very best High Wheel Ordinaries, in the early days of solid rubber tyres. From him, he traced his ancestry back through the Boneshakers and the Velocipedes, for an hundred years or more.

Mr. Diamond Frame, when quite young, married a charming female Drop Frame cycle, a first-class wheel in every respect. She was very beautiful, and wore, on her wedding-day, a coat of white enamel, with full nickel trimmings.

After a year or so he became the father of the prettiest

of little tandem twins, a combination couplet, of which he and the mother were both fond and proud. But their next child was more of a trial, and very hard to manage He grew up to be a very sporty machine, this little Dia-

mond Frame—he was a handsome racing wheel, with slender, light tubes, and a sprocket geared up to a frightful speed. He "scorched" shockingly, and was brought home broken or punctured almost every week. The father and mother were much distressed about his behaviour, and dreaded to hear his bell ring after a long trip, fearing he had come back with a fractured fork or a broken crank.

But the little Drop Frame daughter, who was born later, was her parents' favourite. She was a beautiful model, a modern chainless type, with narrow treads to her tyres, and altogether an up-to-date, stylish machine. Their hopes were set on an ambitious marriage for her, for the Frames were rich, and able to give her a generous dowry.

When the father mentioned the matter to her, however, he found that she had been indiscreet enough to have formed an attachment for an unspeakably low-grade wheel—a machine with no distinguished name-plate, and who dressed in maroon-enamel and carried gear case, spatter-flap, a long pump, and mud guards.

The son agreed with the father, that such a marriage was impossible, and promised to do what he could to prevent the match. He had begun to affect ram's horn handles and toe-clips, and sported a saddle of his own

invention, but he had altogether a stronger sprocket than steering-head.

His style, however, soon interested a very aristocratic young Motorcycle whom he met one day at a club run. The electric wheel had just come from Paris, and had an immense amount of manner. He was a second-hand machine, to be sure, but of foreign make, and a Motorcycle at that; surely here was the chance to marry off the little Drop Frame with a fashionable wedding!

The Motorcycle, however, was expensive, and needed much inducement to agree. It took a long while to arrange the preliminaries, but old Diamond Frame finally agreed to pay for all the repairs he needed. To their astonishment, however, the silly little Drop Frame daughter absolutely refused to leave her beloved third-class wheel, who, she asserted, was worth two of any foreign machines ever imported.

Old Diamond Frame argued with her and lectured her and implored her, but all to no purpose, and he had about made up his mind that he would have to become the father-in-law of a cheap domestic pattern, when an unforeseen accident renewed his hopes for a more pleasant match.

He was speeding with his daughter down Queer-street at a fast clip one day when, suddenly, the Drop Frame's

tyre collapsed, and she fainted away. She was taken into a repair shop to be pumped up, but though she was rubbed with graphite and given a good dose of oil, she found she could not go, and the father decided to send her to a cyclery for awhile.

During her convalescence she was taken up to the school for beginners, on the top floor, and there, to her horror, she found her lover, disgracefully bobbing round the rink, lurching into the padded walls and tumbling over the floor, under the weight of a fat man, learning to ride. To complete his degradation, the miserable machine was actually wearing a brake. A man's bicycle with a brake. How vulgar! How effeminate!

The sight was too much for the delicate little wheel, and she swooned away, and had to be completely repaired. After her recovery she gave an unwilling consent to being engaged to the Motorcycle, and the day for the wedding was set.

But, as the time approached, her heart began to soften toward the poor lover whom she had rejected, and she often wondered if he were happy. She contrasted his affectionate manner with the snobbery of the electric machine whom she was, so soon, to call her husband. He would not work half the time. It needed a very large repair kit to satisfy his needs, and her father had

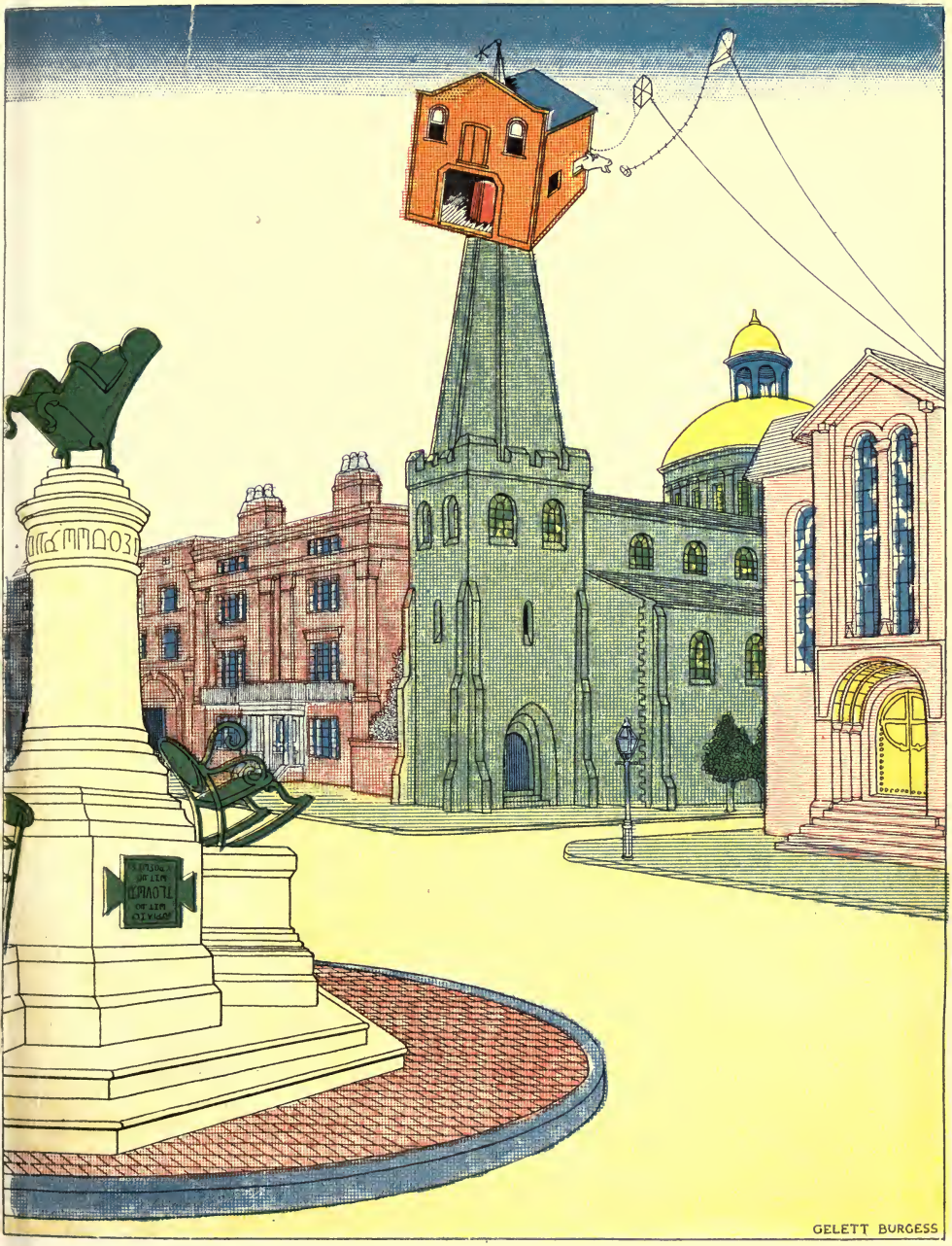
already begun to complain of the way he smoked and the liquid fuel he required. But no word came from her maroon-coloured lover, and she had given herself up as lost, when a second accident changed her whole life.

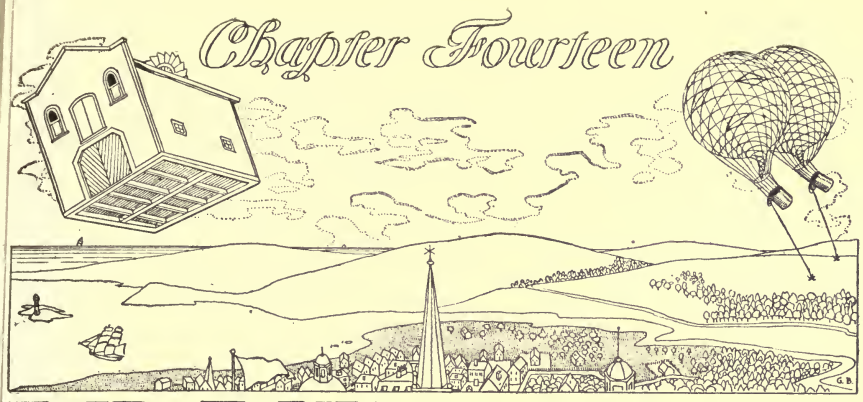
She was out with her *fiancé*, one evening, and had just begun to descend a rather stiff hill, when her brake gave way, and she lost all control of her pedals. "Help me! I'm running away!" she shouted, in terror, to the Motorcycle, but he, fearing to trust his own life on such a steep hill, refused to go after her. Faster and faster she flew down the slope, and she saw the river ahead of her. There seemed to be no way of escaping a violent death when, with a whirr and a rattle, a maroon-enamelled machine shot after her at terrific speed. He charged up to her and caught her handles, and then, setting his brake with all his strength, he held her until the two came to a stop on the very edge of the river bank. It was her faithful lover.

Old Diamond Frame was overcome with gratitude when he heard of the magnificent bravery and devotion of the hitherto despised machine, and, as he was indignant with the miserable cowardice of the Motorcycle, as well, he and his wife immediately gave their consent to the marriage of their daughter to her rescuer as soon as the previous engagement had been cancelled.

The gallant bicycle was given a new coat of black enamel, all his bearings were renewed, and his nickel polished, so that on the day of the wedding the cycles said they had never seen a more handsome bride and groom.

THE FLYING STABLE.


GELETT BURGESS



THE FLYING STABLE

THE little red stable with the peaked roof which lived on Sly-street, in the City o' Ligg, was not very well liked by its neighbours. There was a good deal of talk about its greed and vanity, and it was the firm belief of all the houses on the street that the stable devoured horses. They saw two or three horses go into its great mouth of a door, and they seldom saw any horses come out again. They were very stupid houses, and they could not tell one horse from another; they did not notice that the same three horses went into the stable every night, and they could not see, of course, that the same horses came out of the back door, safe and sound, every morning.

So when the little stable insisted upon having gas put in, the houses grew very indignant.

"The idea!" said one of the oldest residences; "I

have been built eighty-six years, and I never had gas in my life! I think if oil is good enough for me, it is good enough for a little whippersnapper of a stable! Who ever heard of having gas in a stable, anyway?"

But the stable had its own way, and it burnt gas every night, so that its two little windows shone brightly and winked mischievously at the scornful houses opposite till they drew their shutters and slammed their doors in disgust.

Now, the little boy named Yak was going through the West-end of Ligg one night, and he came to Sly-street and caught sight of the stable that was lit with gas. The stable had a windmill built on its roof, which it used for pumping water, and this night being windy, the wheel was flying round and round with a merry rattle and clank as it pumped the water into the tank on the roof.

"Well, well," said Yak, "you are the 'cutest stable I've seen for a long time! You have all the modern conveniences, haven't you?"

"Yes," said the red stable, turning still redder, "I flatter myself that I am thoroughly up-to-date."

"He eats horses!" screamed the old three-story house across the street.

"Is that true?" asked Yak.

The stable shut one window.

"I'll go inside and see," said Yak.

"You'll never come out!" cried the three-story house.

But Yak went in, just the same, and shut the door behind him, and locked it, so the stable could not talk. It was beautifully fitted up inside, and the three horses seemed to be very happy. Yak decided to spend the night there, and, not being used to gas, he blew out all the lights, and lay down on the straw. The stable tried

its best to warn him of his danger from the escaping gas, but, as its door was shut, it could only shake and tremble so that Yak could not go to sleep.

After awhile Yak began to sniff and cough. The place smelt abominably as the gas began to fill up the lofts. So Yak got up, and hearing the windmill whirling on the roof, he climbed out of an upper window, closed it behind him, and crawled over the eaves clear to the ridgepole.

Suddenly, feeling very ill, the stable began to sway and lurch to and fro, rocking like a ship in the sea, and then, as it became filled with gas, it slowly tore away from its foundations and rose steadily in the air, like a balloon. It tried and tried to scream, for the stable was more frightened even than Yak himself, but it could not cry aloud, because its door was shut. So it sailed up into the sky, higher and higher.

Yak was a very valourous little boy, and after a while he began to enjoy the flying trip on the stable. They were borne steadily along towards the sea by a North wind, and by daylight they were over the harbour, and he could see the water miles below him. But how should he ever get back? He had had no breakfast, and he began to get very hungry.

The windmill, meanwhile, had stopped, as there was no more water to pump, and Yak thought he might, by set-

ting the wheel going backwards, use it like a paddle wheel and navigate his airship back towards the City o' Ligg. The plan worked very well, and the stable headed northward and flew along till it got over the town.

There were several balloons in the sky, who had come from the mountains, where they lived, and these teased Yak and the poor dumb flying stable unmercifully, for the balloons were old enemies of the houses, and they were convulsed with laughter to see the ridiculous struggles of the stable floating high amongst the clouds. Two or three kites also appeared and flew around Yak, offering him all kinds of advice, and one was good enough to fetch him up a loaf of bread for his breakfast.

Now, two of the horses had been soon overcome by the fumes of the gas, and had fallen so fast asleep that they never woke up again, but one of them had been sleeping near a crevice in the wall, and when he awakened, feeling very queer and ill with the strange motions of the stable, he broke loose and began to kick at the front door. Finally he succeeded in breaking it open, and in that way the stable was able to talk once more.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" it cried, "what has happened? I never felt so bad in my life! Where am I?"

"You're up in the air," said Yak. "Open your windows and you'll see."

"I don't dare to," said the stable. "I'm afraid of being giddy, up so high!"

"You can't be any giddier than you are now," said Yak.

And as that was true enough, the stable ventured to open one window and look down. Immediately the gas began to escape and the stable dropped through the air.

"Whoa!" cried Yak, frightened nearly off the ridge-pole. "Don't open your windows so wide, but just raise one sash a little, and perhaps we shall get down safely, after all."

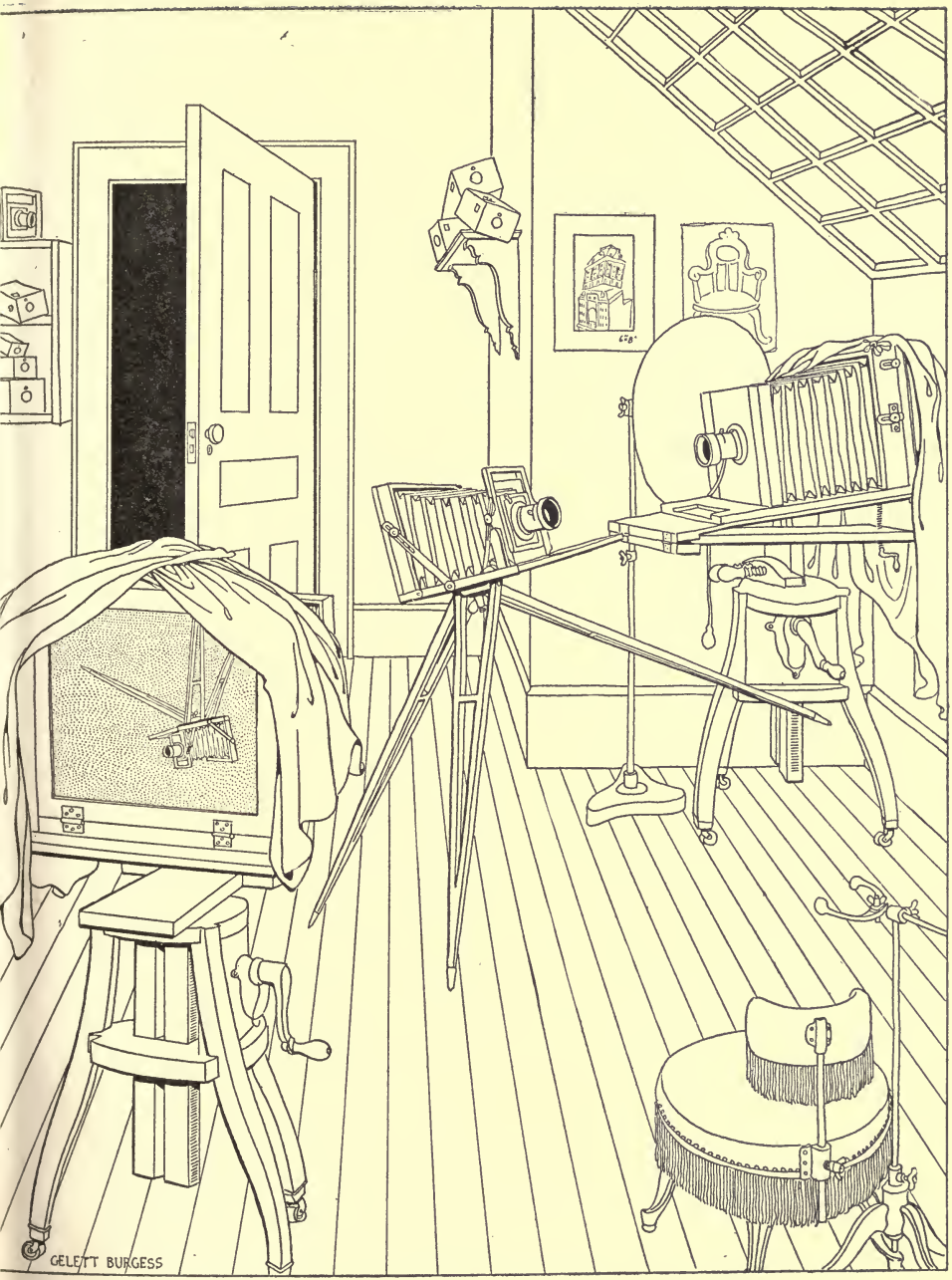
This the stable did, and they fell slowly towards the roofs of the houses. When they were nearly down, Yak cried out: "Look at the houses all watching us! I say, this is fun!"

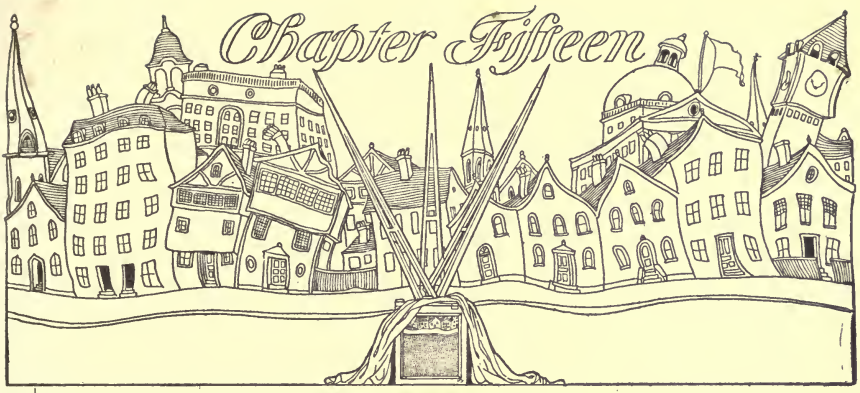
At this remark the stable, which was a very pert and vain little building, and fond of admiration, could not resist the temptation to open both windows very wide, to look down on the City o' Ligg, and, as it did so, a sudden gust of wind swept them towards the church, and the poor little stable, with so much gas escaping, dropped with a downward rush right upon the sharp steeple of the church and stuck there, pierced through floor, ceiling and roof by the slender spire, impaled an hundred feet high above the street!

As for Yak, he was again nearly thrown off the roof by the sudden fall and shock, but after he found he could go no further, he climbed into the stable through a window to see how he could escape. After hard work with a pitchfork and rake, he succeeded in breaking a hole through the wall of the steeple, inside the stable; and once within the spire, he had no trouble in getting down into the belfry, and out through the church, safe as ever.

But for the rest of its life the stable had to remain fixed to the church spire, an object of derision to all the houses of the City o' Ligg; and inside its walls, too, the poor horse had to stay, all *his* life, being fed through the hole in the spire, and getting so little exercise that he grew fatter and fatter. For many years after that he could be seen poking his nose from the window of the stable in the air, gazing thoughtfully over the roofs of the City o' Ligg, pitying the poor horses below, who had to work all day and had never seen the top of a house in their lives.

THE BLIND CAMERA.


GELETT BURGESS



THE BLIND CAMERA

THERE were many Cameras living in the Ligg Photographic Parlours, artists who looked down with scorn upon all other machines, not only upon the manufacturing or working members of the community, but upon such aristocrats as the Bicycles and Balloons as well. The musical instruments they recognised as artists, it is true, but it was the Cameras' opinion that most musical instruments were a bit mad. Even the Very Grand Pianos often got out of tune; and, besides, they were all totally blind, from the Penny Whistles to the Church Organs. The Cameras themselves were deaf and dumb, but they never thought of that, as they had the best eyes of all the objects in the City o' Ligg, except the Telescopes, and the Telescopes didn't count; they were not artists—they were merely elaborate tools.

All sorts of Cameras worked in the Photographic Parlours. There were little Kodak and snap-shot affairs, and hundreds of Tripod Cameras who could walk on three legs; besides these, there were the big studio portrait Cameras mounted on wheels, who rolled majestically around the rooms, wrapped in their robes of black velvet. Some of these machines could take full-size pictures, and used enormously expensive plates.

The most intelligent of them all, however, was a medium-sized, or 6-inch by 8-inch, Tripod Camera. He did not have such expensive fittings as some of the others, for he was not able to afford wide-angle lenses and iris diaphragms, but he used rather quick plates, and his shutter, though not of the latest pattern, gave a rapid, clean exposure, and he could focus as sharply as many of the big instruments. He wore a small, yellow felt focusing cap, and did a good deal of work—outside mostly—for he knew the town well, and could gauge the amount of light required to the sixteenth part of a second; indeed, he had taken very successful pictures in the rain.

It was the 6-inch by 8-inch Camera who took most of the pictures illustrating these stories, so you can see for yourself how clever he was.

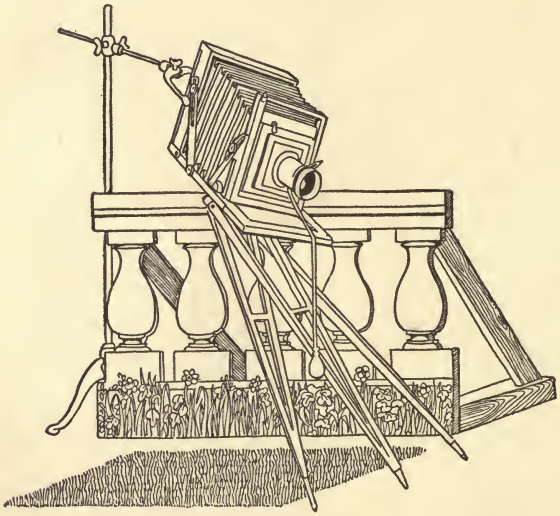
Now, all Cameras, as is well known, see things upside down on their ground-glass screen; to them, the whole

world is topsy-turvy; but they are so used to it that they think it quite natural for carts to roll along with their wheels in the air, and for things to fall *up* instead of down; they have never known anything different. If you will stand on your head for a few minutes, or walk round the room on your hands, you will get a very good idea how the world seems to Cameras, except that it doesn't seem strange to them, and they never get dizzy or top-heavy.

One day, as the 6-inch by 8-inch was returning from taking a picture of the Flying Stable, he dropped into a shop on Queer-street, where he used to buy his chemicals, and there he found for sale a new lens, the only one of its kind ever manufactured, which, he was told, was quite a curiosity. No one had been willing to buy it, for the brass tube was so filled with prisms and reflectors that no Camera cared to risk his eyesight by using such a new-fangled thing. The 6-inch by 8-inch, however, was a curious instrument, and fond of experiments, so he bought the queer lens, and took it home.

He went directly into the dark room, took out his old lens, and inserted the new one. Then he opened the door and stepped out into the studio to tell the others about it. As the light struck him, the Camera staggered on his tripod, and fell—*up to the ceiling*, as he thought—

for the whole place seemed upside down! He sank on a painted imitation balustrade, and put on his cap in terror, not daring to look again. The other Cameras crowded round him, offering him draughts of hypo, and imploring him to tell them what was the matter.



The truth was that the combination of prisms inside the new lens tube cast the image of the things it pointed at upon the screen *upright* instead of inverted, as usual, and the 6-inch by 8-inch had for the first time seen the world right side up. It was a long time before he recovered from his dizziness sufficiently to speak.

"I remember having heard that we Cameras see things

in a different way from other instruments," said an old wet-plate Camera, after the 6-inch by 8-inch had explained his bewilderment; "but, of course, as we can see better than any other machines, it must be that they see things upside down. This new lens seems to reverse the image in some way—but it's no kind of a way for Cameras to see at all—we can't be expected to walk on the ceiling like flies, can we? You'd better take the thing out, and not try to stand on your head! Nobody can take pictures upside down; it isn't natural!"

By this time the Tripod Camera had ventured to peep out through the lens again, and he exclaimed, "Why, you're standing upside down yourself!"

"Nonsense," said the old Portrait Camera, "you're crazy!"

All the other Cameras were of the same opinion, when the 6-inch by 8-inch rose to his three legs, and looked round the room with great amusement. He promenaded unsteadily up and down the studio, trying to get used to the strange topsy-turviness, stumbling among the chairs and furniture, like a sailor on a heaving deck. He did not realise that he was in the same position as the others, for he felt the floor beneath his feet, and he thought it a great joke that all the Cameras clustered about him, and even the little pocket Kodaks on the shelves were star-

ing at him upside down. After a while he got so he could walk fairly well, and he went down the stairs very carefully, and out into the street.

He thought it would be sport to take a picture of the Old Church upside down. It would make a great scandal in the City o' Ligg, for the stone Church was highly respected; in fact, the picture would undoubtedly be suppressed.

The whole City seemed to him to be enchanted, or as if he were in some crazy dream. The Camera was nearly run down several times by Motor Cars running past with their wheels in the air, and when he reached the Church, the sight of that stately, respectable old edifice, with its steeple pointed downward and its foundations in the sky, was so funny that he could not keep still for giggling. He chuckled as he focused his lens, so that the Church and all the Houses seemed to writhe and wriggle, too. He shook with spasms of laughter as he drew out his slide, and when he exposed his plate he was gasping and trembling in the silliest fashion. It was no use, it was too funny; he knew he had spoiled the plate.

He tried a picture of a row of Houses, and found it as hard to keep sober. So he stood on his head, and in this undignified position he took another picture more

calmly, for then the Houses shown on his ground-glass screen seemed, at last, right side up. But even then he couldn't help going off into little convulsions of laughter, every little while, at the thought of how absurd the Church had appeared.

When he got back to the studio, and developed the plates in the dark room, he found the pictures were the queerest he had ever printed. The perspective was all wrong, the pictures were out of focus, the film had melted and run, distorting the Houses so that they seemed made of soft wax which had been left too long in the sun—but, strange to say, they were still right side up, after all! He could not understand it.

The next day, after a good night's sleep, he got up, and, forgetting all about the new lens, he started to walk across the studio without noticing. When, however, he did really look around, he saw the room was upside down again, and again he was so terrified at the bewildering sight that he lost his balance and fell, hitting the end of the lens tube with terrific force, smashing all the prisms and lenses into little pieces.

When he at last revived, after having been taken to the dark room, the Cameras found that the poor 6-inch by 8-inch was totally blind. They put lens after lens into his eye tube, but though he could sometimes see well

enough to be able to crawl around the room in the sunlight, he was never able to print any more pictures.

Of course he tried, continually, exposing plate after plate in hopes he might be able to print some sort of a picture, but though he tried salt prints and silver prints, gold and platinum prints, blue prints and bromides, there was never anything but a blur on the paper, for his negatives were almost opaque, as if they had been painted with varnish. And so, disappointed and miserable, he pined away.

The other Cameras in the Ligg Photographic Parlours were very sorry for the poor 6-inch by 8-inch, not only because he was blind, but because they all considered him crazy. The Tripod Camera was all the time talking about what he called his "revelation," or the strange idea of the world the mysterious lens had given him. It was his firm idea that the Cameras all saw things wrongly, and that what *they* would call upside down was really right side up, and that things really fell *down* instead of *up*. But the Cameras only laughed to each other when the 6-inch by 8-inch talked like this, and said, when he had gone, "Poor thing! that fall cracked him badly!"

But the fall had, indeed, affected him more than they thought, for, after he was found one winter morning, still and cold, at the window, looking for the rising sun, and

they knew that he would never crawl around on his three legs any more, or try and take his hopeless little prints, they came across a pile of negatives of his in a dark room. No one knew that he had taken so many pictures, and the Cameras were about to throw the meaningless, opaque sheets of glass into the dustbin, sadly, at the thought of the poor Camera's pathetic struggles to see, when suddenly the oldest studio Portrait Camera, the old wet-plate machine, caught a glimpse of something on one of the negatives.

"Look! look!" he cried, in great excitement, and he pointed to a negative that stood slantwise on the shelf. As the light struck it obliquely, and was reflected from its film, there appeared on the surface of the plate the most wonderful picture the Cameras had ever seen. When the plate was viewed directly, it was nothing but a dull, colourless sheet of film, but, looking in this slanting way, in the reflected light, it was a perfect picture, in all the true colours of nature! The sky showed blue, the trees were green, the flowers were red and yellow! The poor 6-inch by 8-inch Camera had taken better pictures than he ever knew.

The negatives were all saved, and put in a picture gallery, where they were exhibited as the most wonderful curiosities of the City o' Ligg. From time to time,

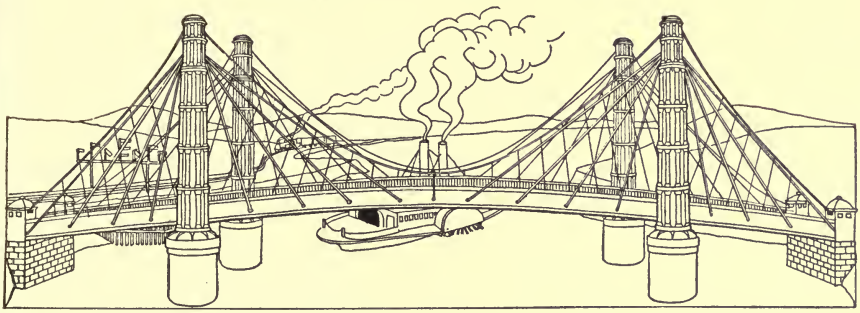
stereopticon shows were given, and the marvellously beautiful views thrown on the screen were the delight of all the inhabitants. As time went on the fame of the 6-inch by 8-inch Camera grew and grew, and now he is universally acknowledged to have been the most talented artist that Ligg has ever produced, and his genius is spoken of with immense pride.

But, in spite of that, the Cameras still believe, and probably always will believe, that the 6-inch by 8-inch was crazy, because he always insisted that upside down was right side up !

THE BUMPTIOUS BRIDGE.


GELETT BURGESS

Chapter Sixteen



THE BUMPTIOUS BRIDGE

THERE were three bridges over the river Wob: the funny tubular girder, which confined the bothersome brig, the stone arches near the batteries, and the suspension-bridge, above the city. The last was the most disagreeable of them all; finally, it went altogether too far, and got itself into trouble.

It was not a good, honest suspension-bridge, hung from wire cables, as a suspension-bridge rightly should be, but it was supported by iron rods and straps, almost like a girder or a truss. Its floor rose in a long curve, almost like an arch; altogether it was a mixture of styles, a mongrel bridge with a beastly temper—no one thought it was safe.

It had four great cast-iron towers, which rested on concrete piers in the river, and the ends of its suspenders, as the jointed rods which were stretched over the towers

might be called, were anchored to masonry abutments, over which were built little wooden pavilions. What made the bridge more dangerous was that it had no sway-bracing, so that it trembled and shook in the wind, like a camel catching a cold, and more than one electric car had been thrown off the track by the vibration, while crossing the river on the suspension bridge.

The bridge was always a growler and a grumbler, but, when the ferry line was established, plying across the river from the City o' Ligg to the Highland side, the Suspension was almost unbearable.

"Ain't I good enough to take you across?" he complained. "What's the use of going by water when you can go by land?" But as he charged two cents toll, and the ferry-boats carried passengers for one cent, nearly every one took the steamers, who puffed across the river all day long, going and coming beneath the very floor of the bridge, smothering it in smoke.

One Saturday, the bridge, who had had hardly a passenger crossing for a week, resolved not to stand it any longer. "If they don't want to use me any more," he said, "I'll be hanged to my towers if I'll stay here any longer for them to laugh at!" So he pulled, angrily, with all his might, on his rods and straps and hangers and braces, till it seemed as if he were going to pull up

his anchorage by the roots. Instead of that, however, he broke his suspenders off short, on the Highland side, and the jerk, when the rods snapped, threw him over, upside down, splashing and sprawling in the middle of the River Wob, to the terror of the ferry-boats who were passing. He struggled wildly for a while, in the water, his concrete piers in the air, and his cast-iron towers wobbling like a baby's legs under him, all his tension members, that were built to resist pulling, being compressed and bent out of shape, and all his compression members, that were built to resist pushing and pressing, being pulled at unmercifully. It was very painful in this unaccustomed position, but the bridge managed at last to crawl along up to the bank on the City o' Ligg side, till his two front tower-legs climbed upon the track of the Railway. Here he stood a while, resting, his two rear towers still in the deepest part of the River Wob.

There was a big semaphore across the railway, at that point, and it cried to the bridge, "What 'O! get off the track!" and it held up all its arms to warn the trains not to pass.

"I'm going to stay right here!" said the Bumptious Bridge; "if the trains don't want to go over me, they can go round me!" and it chuckled to itself, to find how easily it would get its revenge.

Pretty soon a train appeared, far down the track, whistling and roaring. When it saw the semaphore warning it to stop, it slowed up and came on slowly, stopping in front of the bridge tower that prevented its passing. The engine, which was of English make, pushed its buffers against the tower with all its strength, but it couldn't budge the bridge. The engine grew more and more angry, butting and bellowing with great fury, but it was no use. It could not pass the obstruction that way.

Soon another whistle was heard, and another train came flying down the line, from the other direction. It was the Ligg Fast Mail. When it saw the semaphore waving its arms, it slowed up, too, and came cautiously along till it reached the bridge. "What 'O! What's the matter?" it cried.

The bridge didn't even trouble itself to answer questions. There it was, and there it was going to stay. But the Mail Train was in a hurry; it would never do to be interfered with in this fashion.

Now the Mail Train was of American manufacture, with a big locomotive, and cars with platforms and doors in the ends, in the American style. The engine had huge, high boilers, and its piston and steam chest were outside; it had a big smokestack with a wood-burning funnel, a cowcatcher, and all that sort of thing. It was built for

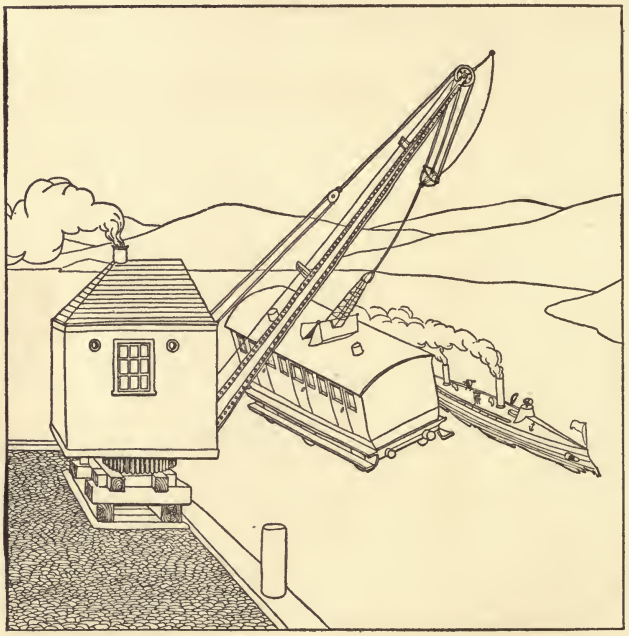
steep grades and sharp curves, and it could do a mile a minute, easily. It did not propose to be stopped by a mongrel suspension-bridge with cast-iron towers, if it *were* upside down on the line.

So the Mail Train backed up the line about a mile, and then the locomotive opened its throttle and tore down the track at full speed. When it got near the towers, the train gave a TREMENDOUS leap into the air, and hurdled the bridge as prettily as a hunting horse takes a five-barred gate, and came gracefully down upon the track on the other side, exactly on the rails, and then, without so much as stopping to say good-bye, that Fast Mail tore down the track for the City o' Ligg, to make up for lost time.

The English train felt rather cheap, after this performance, and it backed down the line for a half a mile, while the bridge was laughing. Finally it came to a little coal-crane, on a wharf beside the river. The crane was very sympathetic, and offered its services. "I think I might throw your carriages into the river, one by one," it said. "They're little ones, and not so heavy, and they'd float down stream, and no doubt help would be sent, when they were seen."

As there seemed to be no other way out of the dilemma, the Locomotive reluctantly consented to allow the exper-

iment to be tried. The crane picked up the carriages, one by one, grabbing them by their ventilators, then swung itself round on its pivot and tossed them into the river. They floated off, in a bobbling procession, down



stream, and, just as the guard's van dropped into the water, a torpedo boat came snuffling up the river, in a great hurry.

"What's all this?" he said, excitedly. "I thought these were some new kind of destroyers coming down to

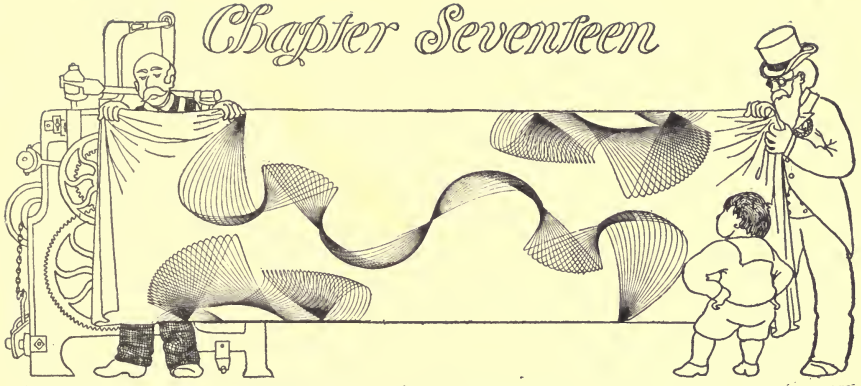
attack the City o' Ligg, for sure ! Lucky for those third-class carriages that I made out their numbers in time. I was just going to pepper them with my rapid-fire guns !"

The torpedo boat seemed to be much disappointed that there was no enemy to be fought, after all, but when it heard about the suspension-bridge, and how it had blocked the traffic on the road, it brightened up a bit. "I'll settle him !" it said, and it shoved a Whitehead torpedo, full of clock-work and dynamite, into its tube, and puffed gaily up stream.

The Locomotive followed it up the line, cautiously, but all the crane was able to see of what happened was a huge puff of white smoke and spray, and a scattering of little rods, straps and braces, like a handful of jackstraws tossed into the air. But next day the Locomotive came back to thank the crane, and told it that there was to be a new bridge built at the same place, a wrought-iron cantilever drawbridge of the latest design, and that they hadn't found enough of the old suspension-bridge to use for fish-line sinkers.

But, somehow, the English locomotive never seemed to be very friendly with the American Fast Mail, after that !

THE ECCENTRIC LOOM.



Chapter Seventeen

THE ECCENTRIC LOOM

It was very evident that Loom No. 7 was crazy. All the other weaving machines in the mill laughed at her, and yet they were a bit afraid of her, too. She worked a deal more swiftly and noiselessly than they, and she never seemed to get tired and never broke down.

All the other looms followed the fashions very carefully. If stripes were in style, they wove stripes, or if the latest mode demanded plaids, or checks, or pin points, or polka dots, they all worked busily at these patterns—all, that is, except No. 7.

No one had ever seen before such queer patterns as the crazy loom wove. Her designs seemed absolutely meaningless to the other machines. They had never seen such hideous combinations of colour, they said, for they used the regular blues and browns and reds, while

No. 7 filled her bobbins with all sorts of unheard-of hues. Such monotonous, crude tints they were, in the opinion of the other machines, that they wondered she was allowed steam power at all—surely, she was only wasting good material.

But Loom No. 7 paid no attention whatever to her associates, and threw her shuttles back and forth all day, often keeping on through the lunch hour, while the other looms were being oiled and cleaned. She always seemed to be intensely interested in her work, too, and rattled and clicked away to herself and never talked to the others. As she rumbled steadily along, the wide roll of fabric she was weaving grew fatter and fatter, and when she stopped to put in a bobbin of salmon or olive-green into her warp or woof, she would look carefully at the mysterious pattern on her tapestry, as if it really meant something to her, and she seemed to know perfectly whether or not she had dropped a stitch or broken a thread. Then she would rattle all over and hurry on, *bangy-ty-bang*, *thumpy-ty-thump*, as if she were afraid she wouldn't last long enough to finish the piece.

Now at the end of each month the foreman came around to collect and carry away the finished pieces of cloth from the looms, and on the very day that No. 7 completed her roll of tapestry, he came into the mill-

sheds with the Mayor of the City o' Ligg and the little boy named Yak. The Mayor had just built himself a new house, and he had come to select stuff with which to furnish it, and Yak had come to help him in his choice.

So they went with the foreman of the mill from one loom to another inspecting the different patterns. "These are all alike," said Yak. "Can't you show us something new and interesting?"

"Well, no," said the foreman. "We mostly follow the prevailing styles in this mill, and all the patterns are pretty much alike. But come over this way, I'll show you something queer!" He led them over to No. 7, and the Mayor and Yak looked curiously at the roll of tapestry.

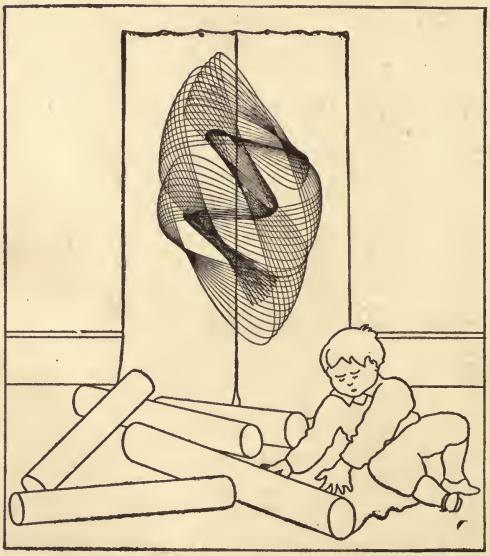
The Mayor laughed. "That *is* a crazy design, isn't it?" he said. "I don't see how you can afford to keep a loom running on this insane tapestry. You'll never be able to sell this stuff!"

The foreman scratched his head, and said, thoughtfully, "No, I suppose not—and yet, I dunno! It seems to me that the loom is either crazy, as you say, or else it is a mighty clever machine; altogether too clever for me. I confess I can't understand it at all, and that's the reason why I have an idea it must be something wonderful. What d'you think, Yak?"

Yak was silently examining the design, very carefully, and said nothing for some time. Finally he said to the foreman :

"You send this roll of tapestry up to the Mayor's house, and let me study it out, and I'll let you know in a day or so what I think."

The Mayor was surprised at this, for he was quite sure



he would never want such a jumbled, unfinished thing in his house, but he had a great deal of faith in little Yak, and he made no objection. So the roll of tapestry was taken away, to the consternation of all the other looms, who whispered to each other, "I say, No. 7 may not be

such a fool as we thought, after all! I always thought she was pretty deep. She's a 'cute one, that No. 7!"

In two days Yak sent for the Mayor and the foreman. He had been cutting up the tapestry, and had it all spread out on a bare floor in the new dining-room, and, to the surprise of the two men, they saw that, in the way Yak had pieced it together, as it should go on the walls of the room, the whole sheet of tapestry formed a beautiful and elaborate design of great vigour and originality, and that the juxtaposition of colours formed a fresh and charming scheme of decoration that delighted them both. None of this had been noticeable in the narrow strips woven by the crazy loom, but many of them, placed side by side and properly matched, made a single dignified and interesting design, appropriate for the decoration of such an apartment as the dining-room of the Mayor of the City o' Ligg.

When the foreman went back to the mill, he oiled up No. 7 very carefully, and filled her bobbins with the most expensive silk skeins, tissues of gold and silver, and threads dyed with the rarest hues; he had all her parts rubbed, cleaned and polished, so that she shone like an Empress upon her throne.

The other looms were jealous and envious at this, yet they did not hesitate to imitate No. 7 as best they could.

If it were the fashion to be crazy, and weave mad patterns of no possible meaning or form, why then they would not bother to follow their cards, but would throw their shuttles across haphazard. So that month the looms in the mill had a gay time, bouncing along carelessly, joking, and misbehaving themselves generally. They never troubled to stop if a thread broke or knotted, for what difference did it make? If No. 7 could go on as she pleased, without rule or reason, making up her pattern as she went along, why shouldn't they? If it were the clever thing to be incomprehensible, they could weave nonsense as well as she, and so they went on with their foolish and ridiculous work for a month.

When the foreman came around next time, however, to inspect the work of the looms, and saw the absurd, nonsensical botches upon which the silly machines had wasted their materials, he grew very angry. The stuff was not good enough even for sacking, for it was weakly woven, full of holes and knots and loops, besides being of such barbarous patterns that it made his eyes ache to look at the rolls of fabric. He ordered the looms to be stripped of their silks and woolen threads and had all their bobbins filled with rough hemp and jute of a horrible dirt colour, and set them to work on the coarsest bagging. But the roll from No. 7, who had worked

patiently and carefully all the month, he had wrapped carefully and packed in tinfoil and sent, in a solid mahogany case, to the International Industrial Exposition of the year.

The looms could never understand it, and they hated No. 7 more than ever. But No. 7 kept on quietly, without condescending to answer their sneers and ridicule. She could have explained the whole thing, if she had cared, perhaps, but she had no time to talk.


D. P. ELDER
AND
ORGAN SHEPARD.